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MOTHER TONGUE
N EDUCATION

D A LANGUAGE POLICY FOR CEYLON

By

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MAN IN HIS OWN TONGUE, WHEREIN HE WAS BORN.

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PREFACE

This little book is the result of an abounding faith in the future of the people of Ceylon and a corresponding faith in education as a means to the speedy realisation of that future. It is an essay on an important aspect of education that may help people to think clearly wherever there are like problems, for these problems exist in varying degrees in many parts of the world. Often there is a danger of educationists being not alive to the social and political implications of educational problems. This essay is something more than an educational thesis. It is an appeal to all believers in education to consider its far-reaching possibilities and it is a passionate appeal to all lovers of our motherland to think of some things in connection with her future. The publication of the Report of the Special Committee on Education in November, 1943, and the resolution recommending Sinhalese and Tamil as official languages adopted by the State Council in May, 1944, have brought to the forefront the question of a language policy for school and state. The present book attempts an answer.

In the first chapter we make a rapid survey of the history of Ceylon through the ages; we see there is a characteristic national tradition, composed of streams of culture and language, which education must take account of. A picture of the present school-system, with its weak points strongly shaded, is presented in the next chapter. Then we inquire, in the third chapter, into the question of the place of language in the growth of the child and, from the point of view of psychology, conclude that the mother tongue is the natural medium of instruction. The fourth chapter deals with the content of education and here we emphasize the value of the national tradition for effective education, a tradition the core of which is the native language; while we recognise the value of a fruitful contact with the outside world we see how solid a foundation the past is. The larger

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question of language as a vital factor in nationhood leads in the fifth chapter to advocate the use of the national languages in public administration as well as in schools. proceed in the sixth chapter to draw up a plan of reconstruction since our language policy is best examined in context of an educational system. The brief final chap sounds a call to fellow teachers.

The first draft of this book was made in London the spring of 1939, but many sections of it have been revis in the light of criticism and of recent developments in Ce lon and abroad. The author thanks the following memb of the Staff of the University of London Institute of Edu tion for help in various ways: Dr Susan Isaacs, Head the Department of Child Psychology, who read the wh of the first draft and strongly urged publication and a gave special help in connection with Chapter III; P fessor Sir Fred Clarke, Director of the Institute, who ga valuable criticism of the whole MS; Professor H. R. Haml Head of the Research Department, with whom the aut discussed some parts of Chapter III; and Dr. Reinhold Schairer, Head of the Department of International Studies, who helped with parts of Chapter V. Thanks are due to Mr. Arthur Mayhew of the Colonial Office and Rev. C. Kingsley-Williams, formerly of Achimota and Madras, for many suggestions in connection with every chapter and for encouraging publication. Thanks are also due to Miss E. Scowcroft of Vembadi, Jaffna for help with proof reading. It may, however, be well to add that the author alone is responsible for the opinions expressed in the book.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCING CEYLON

Ceylon has a recorded history reaching back to at least the famous sixth century before Christ. But the two main streams of tradition that have irrigated her historical development go further back and derive their source from India, and are in fact drawn from the same great cultural reservoir from which the Eastern half of the world yet draws its inspiration. Of these two streams of tradition the one gives its birth to Siddharta, Gautama Buddha, India's great spiritual genius and one of the world's greatest sons. The other tradition is older still and represents Hindu Culture as developed in the schools of Southern India. Each of these traditions developed a distinct individuality in Ceylon, and in fact the Buddhist tradition attained to such perfection here, both in its philosophy and its practice, that when Buddhism disappeared as a separate faith from the land of its birth, Ceylon came to be regarded by all Buddhist lands as the spiritual home of the religion of the Middle Way.

The Buddhist tradition used the Sinhalese language for its appeal to the people and the allied Pali language for preserving the ancient canon. Thus Sinhalese and Pali developed side by side, but for a long time the language of the sacred texts held a higher place than the vulgar tongue. Slowly, however, Sinhalese came into its own, the new language drawing rich nourishment from Pali and Sanskrit and also from Tamil. Sinhalese literature entered upon its golden age in the fifteenth century in the spacious times of King Parakrama Bahu VI. Princes, priests and peasants contributed towards this renaissance, but pride of place belongs to the author of the immortal Kavyasekharaya, Sri Rahula of Totagamuwa.

The Hindu tradition was no doubt connected both with early Buddhism and the early history of the Sinhalese, but its characteristic development in Ceylon as in South India was in the Saiva religion and the Tamil language. This language is one of the earliest of the known speeches of man and the vehicle of a literature that is among the highest literary achievements of the human race. Of all Indian languages it has a literature second only to Sanskrit. Its

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greatest extant classics, Silappadikaram, Manimekalai and the sacred Kural, belong to the Sangam Age of the early centuries of the Christian era. In its new home in Ceylon, Tamil had its savants and in its spoken style has preserved a purity known as Sen-Tamil that is beginning to attract South Indian scholars. The fifteenth century witnessed not only the greatest epoch of Sinhalese poetry but also the most flourishing period of Tamil poetry in Ceylon, of which Arasa Kesari's epic translation of Raghuvamsam was the greatest work.

Such then have been the traditions and the literature that guided and illuminated the paths of our forefathers during their eventful sojourn in the land they settled in. The poetry prompted by these traditions directed their lives and ennobled their hearts; it consecrated home life and cheered them in their toil; it wiped away tears and comforted the dying. It released the fountains of life and the springs of hope. And it assured them of a life beyond life. But the inspiration supplied by Buddhism and Hinduism bore fruit in other ways too. For our ancestors cultivated ideals of Truth and Beauty and Goodness and during the active centuries these ideals flowered in works of Peace and lives of Heroes. They cultivated music and delighted in the rhythm of the dance. Their temples and monasteries were closely connected with the national system of education. Their architecture was also dedicated to religion. Their colossal schemes of irrigation tanks still astonish modern engineers. Their skill in medical science was associated with a great tradition of free medical aid to the people. They created a great wealth of social customs and traditional law, craft guilds and popular institutions. They established too a fruitful contact with the outside world, extending from the Nile to the Bramahputra, from Rome to China, and ambassadors and traders travelled hither and thither with messages to kings or merchandise to foreign shores. There was no narrowness in Ceylon's cultural or commercial outlook, and her ancient visitors included pilgrims from China, merchants from Rome and tourists from Arabia.

An Eastern Rome! so exclaimed a foreign historian when he saw the ruined city of Anuradhapura. There, as

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in the other buried cities of Ceylon, a civilisation carved in stone though in ruins still refuses to crumble to the dust. These stones are an imperishable record of our history and beneath them are the bones of those who erected them. These men speak to us from their graves. Through these stones they proclaim to us the glory that was Lanka. They call to us to restore that glory with the work of our hands and hearts.

From the time of the Treaty of Kandy to the Report of the Donoughmore Commission [1] it has suited the purpose of many a foreign official, publicist and historian to point out the differences between the Sinhalese and Tamils and to point to our national history as only a tale of war between the Sinhalese people and the Tamil "invaders." Very subtly this view has been communicated to Ceylonese writers and public men and thus a false view of the past has gained wide currency. It is no doubt true that there were occasional spells of fighting in those early days of pioneering and colonisation and when it came to war sons of both races exhibited prowess and chivalry of which their descendants need not be ashamed. But this tale of war is not the true tale of Ceylon. Wars are no more the history of this country than they are the true history of any country. It may be said perhaps that wars in Europe have often been wars in which whole peoples were interested, but our wars have really been the sport of kings. For, while princes were contending for power and crowns were changing heads, the peasantry in their fields and self-governing villages, the scholars in their schools or retreats and the monks in their monasteries lived unconcernedly in peace cherishing the everlasting goods of the nation. It is no wonder that while the civilisations of Greece and Rome have passed away ours continues to live. Whoever then would write the true history of Ceylon must write a history of Peace.

That history is the story of a splendid co-operation between the two races. The two traditions we have spoken of have flowed into each other at many points of the Island's

1. Fancy the preamble to the Act of Union of 1707 or to the Reform Bill of 1832 referring to the strife of Pict, Scot and Briton or the Puritan Civil Wars !

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history and often lost identity. Many a Tamil prince was a friend of the Sangha and many a noble Sinhalese king built some Hindu temple for his Tamil subjects. Many a memorial of stone is also a monument to the joint efforts of Sinhalese and Tamil craftsmen. But further. Does not the Mahavamsa record that the blood of the brother races was mixed in the veins of princes and people? Were not some of the greatest monarchs of our history the very embodiments of national unity? And this is not merely a story of long ago; the process of fusion still proceeds slowly but surely.[1] And there is too the happy riddle of Tamil-speaking Sinhalese in the Negombo District. Co-operation between the two races certainly extended in the past to institutions of learning. Thus the Privena established at Totagamuwa in 1295 provided "instruction for Buddhists and Hindus, clerical and lay, in all the knowledge of the time, the Buddhist Canon and the four Vedas. The languages studied included Pali and Sanskrit, Sinhalese and Tamil." The question which race settled earlier in this country is only of academic interest; but whoever thinks in terms of race in the affairs of the country is not only a traitor to Ceylon but is false to the past.

Two other traditions have entered the Island in modern times. One is Islam with its emphasis on the oneness of God and the brotherhood of believers. Some of the Ceylon Muslims are converts, others came from abroad. The main section, known as Ceylon Moors, speak Tamil and sometimes Sinhalese as well.[2] Their way of life and mode of thought is not far different from that of other Ceylonese. Islam has brought its contribution to the country, but it has not disturbed the fundamental unity of the national culture. On the other hand, thanks to the Muslim poets and theologians of South India, there is first-rate

1 Registered Sinhalese—Tamil marriages exceed one hundred a year, according to the Registrar-General.

2 "To answer the question, what is the mother tongue of the Ceylon Moors, should not be difficult. It is certainly Tamil. The Moors who occupy the Northern and Eastern parts of Ceylon speak no other language. The Moors occupying the remaining portions of Ceylon speak both Tamil and Sinhalese. But even in these parts no Ceylon Moor is found who cannot speak Tamil. And all of them use Tamil as their home language".

—A. M. A. Azeez in the *Ceylon Daily News*, Dec. 10, 1941

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Muslim literature in Tamil, which language is also the one used in the "kutbas" and "hathees" of local "imams" and "alims". Again Muslim merchants have for a long period before the coming of the European races to our shores and even afterwards contributed not only to the extension of Ceylon's international trade but her international contact as well.

The other tradition, that of the Christian religion, first arrived rather incongruously as the faith of foreign invaders. But even in the injury done to the Island by foreign occupation there was a measure of salvation. For surely we had fallen on evil days and led a listless life; the past was hardly alive and the future uncertain; political intrigues marked this period of decadence. It was then the foreigner burst in like a storm. He ravished our land and trampled over our people. He pulled up the past by the roots and he imposed his alien culture. But there is value in discordance, as pointed out by Professor Whitehead.[1] Dealing with the history of civilisation in Europe he shows how Hellenism, instead of advancing by fresh adventure, was just striving for a static maintenance of past achievements. Instead of advance, decadence followed. But the ate of the Mediterranean civilisation was saved by the fortunate irruptions of barbarians and the rise of two new religions, Christianity and Islam. The Indian seer who composed Raghuvamsam has an equally instructive parable: "Holy Father, this curse of yours is to me really a blessing in disguise. When the fire burns a cultivated field it makes it the more fertile for sending up shoots from the seeds sown."

It was, however, not merely by offering a challenge that the meeting with the West benefited us. The Christian Religion, though of Eastern origin, came to us through the mediation of men from the West. Christianity presented to us the wonderful personality of Jesus and his vision of the Kingdom of God where a man loves his neighbour as himself. This religion was preached by missionaries from Europe and America and its inspiration led them to establish schools and hospitals. Communities of Christians

[1] A. N. Whitehead: Adventures of Ideas, Cambridge, 1933.

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sprang up over the land and fortunately they did not become a social caste. But the appeal of the Sermon on the Mount transcends the walls of Christian Churches. In India it has found echoes in unexpected places from the time of Keshub Chander Sen to that of Mahatma Gandhi. So it does in Ceylon, where the true catholicity of the older religious tradition sanctions every new road to the self-same goal.

But the distinctive contribution the West has to offer is in the fields of Science and Government. The peculiar glory of the Western peoples consists in the scientific exploration of natural phenomena and in the scientific organisation of political institutions. We have yet to make full use of this gift they can give us. The synthesis of East and West cannot be worked out till we breathe the air of material and moral freedom. For the creative spirit flourishes only in a spacious freedom. But the absence of national freedom as well as the lack of a genuine national education has placed us in a helpless situation. And in the condition in which we are placed we have developed an excess of negative attitudes. Some deny there is anything in our national culture and blindly worship the West. Others are uneasy souls who hate the West and would fain go back to the past. Neither of these attitudes is helpful. Fresh creation will come neither from that copying nor from this conservative attitude. We must however await the coming of freedom in government and in culture for the emergence of a saner outlook, which will permit the judicious selection of the elements of a political civilisation to enrich what is essentially a cultural civilisation. To adapt words Radhakrishnan used of India : If Ceylon gains freedom within, then the Western spirit will be a great help to the Ceylonese mind.

To make anything of the future we must possess the confidence that can only be born of a consciousness of our priceless inheritance. The spirit that has characterised that inheritance is threefold: Firstly, an unconquerable belief even among the unlettered peasantry in the supremacy of the spiritual over the material; secondly, the ready acceptance of the principle of peace or non-violence based on the idea of the unity of all life; thirdly, a willingness to

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enter into harmonious relationship with members of all communities as is shown by the fact that Sinhalese and Tamils, Moors and Burghers, live side by side and show a toleration for one another that is hardly equalled in many other parts of the world. If we would that the river of life should flow vigorously in our country, we must see that the flowing stream draws its waters from the perennial spring of our inherited culture, and education must be the unobstructed channel by which the national tradition passes from generation to generation.

POPULATION STATISTICS

I. Population by Race

Race	1931 Census	1940 Estimated
Sinhalese	3,473,030	4,037,000
Tamils	1,417,477	1,499,000
Moors	325,913	381,000
Burghers, etc.	32,315	39,000
Malays	15,977	18,000
Others	60,642	46,000
	5,325,354	6,020,000

II. Population by Religion

Religion	1931 Census
Buddhists	3,267,500
Hindus	1,158,500
Christians	523,100
Muslims	356,900
Others	900

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III. Population by Race and Province (1921 Census)

Race	Total Ceylon	W.P.	C.P.	S.P.	N.P.	E.P.	N.W.P.	N.C.P.	Uva	Sabaragamuwa
Low Country Sinhalese	1,921,057	1,005,288	55,970	630,851	1,689	2,182	164,645	5,974	12,018	48,275
Kandyan Sinhalese	1,089,097	12,735	316,142	1,754	2,106	6,562	254,984	66,912	124,983	302,900
Ceylon Tamils	517,324	25,072	9,742	1,767	352,322	101,880	13,943	6,182	3,261	3,020
Indian Tamils	602,735	91,293	283,771	12,656	4,479	1,371	23,730	4,555	82,562	98,093
Ceylon Moors	251,938	51,896	33,632	20,597	12,608	75,475	28,112	10,933	6,096	12,576
Indian Moors	33,026	16,472	7,281	305	487	517	3,629	605	1,415	2,212
Europeans	8,118	3,465	2,792	294	123	110	183	58	564	510
Burghers & Eurasians	29,439	19,122	4,150	1,562	660	1,371	800	172	668	898
Malays	13,402	6,873	2,846	1,141	100	59	1,106	101	670	499
Veddas	4,510	1	—	—	50	3,188	—	823	448	—
Others	21,959	14,630	1,413	307	205	106	1,049	210	1,179	2,831
Total	4,498,605	1,246,847	717,739	671,234	374,829	192,821	492,181	96,525	233,864	471,814

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CHAPTER II.

THE SCHOOLS OF CEYLON

Education is in law compulsory between the ages of 6 and 14. In actual practice compulsion is not enforced everywhere and there are many localities without any schools. The total number of pupils attending schools was estimated by the Donoughmore Commission (1928) as approximately 55 per cent of the number of children of school-going age; but the proportion may be somewhat bigger to-day. The vast majority of these children attend Sinhalese or Tamil Schools, generally for about four years. There are nearly 5,000 Sinhalese or Tamil Schools and somewhere about 650,000 pupils attending these schools.[1] Several schools continue classes beyond the primary stage, but towards the top of the school there are fewer and fewer pupils. As a rule those who continue education in their mother-tongue do so in the hope of qualifying as teachers later on in these same schools, and it may be said that the purpose of post-primary education in Sinhalese or Tamil is to produce teachers who will perpetuate these schools. The matter of this education is largely philological and the method traditional[2]; in some cases it may even be said that the language cultivated is not present-day speech. Though the Department of Education describes such of these schools as have post-primary classes as secondary schools, it is rather a misleading term. On the whole it may be said that the aim of education in the mother-tongue in Ceylon is little more than literacy.

The next type, for schools are classified by the language employed as medium of instruction, is the Bilingual School. There are about 190 such schools with an enrolment of 20,000 pupils. Unlike the Sinhalese and Tamil Schools, where no fees are levied, school fees are charged in these schools, but they are nominal. In fact parents prefer these schools because they provide English

[1] These numbers for 1938, the last pre-war year.

[2] "The progress of Vernacular schools is retarded by traditional methods of teaching, unsatisfactory equipment, and the absence of playing fields and gardens."

—*Administration Report of the Director of Education for 1938.*

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education without much expense to themselves. The usual type of Bilingual School commences with Sinhalese or Tamil as the medium of instruction and, working on a 'sliding scale' by which English progressively replaces the mother-tongue, it ends with the English medium and the English Junior School Certificate. Bilingual education was started in Ceylon as an experiment following the recommendations of an Education Commission (1929). But apart from one experiment reported in the Year Book of Education,[1] the Bilingual Schools have not been conducted in the spirit of an experiment. Many Bilingual Schools came into existence in order to meet the demand for cheap English education; they were Sinhalese or Tamil Schools which were transformed into Bilingual Schools. As a matter of fact in recent years several of these schools have become English Schools preparing candidates for the English Senior School Certificate.

A third type of school, ushered in without clear definition of policy, is the Central School. In his Report for 1942, the Director of Education described these schools as vocational, the practical courses provided comprising Agriculture, Commerce, Housecraft, Handicrafts, Tailoring, Leatherwork, &c. In 1944, with the recommendations of the Special Committee on Education awaiting approval by the State Council, existing Central Schools and several other Government English, Sinhalese, Tamil and Bilingual schools were converted into a new type of so-called Central School. These Central Schools preparing pupils mainly for the English Senior School Certificate appear very much like other English Secondary Schools and do not look like anything described by the Special Committee, nor do they resemble Central Schools in England. They incorporate the principle of free education, including free board, which has not yet been adopted as a national policy. These schools have just be legitimized by a Code rule defining them as Schools providing courses of instruction up to the standard of the Higher School Certificate Examination.

Lastly, we come to the English Schools. There are nearly 300 Assisted or Government English Schools and

1 L. Macræ: The problem of Bilingualism in Ceylon, Year Book of Education, 1939.

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over one hundred private ones. The total enrolment is 80,000. About one-half this number is in Senior Secondary Schools of which there are 125 varying in size and standing.[1] The other English Schools are classified as either Junior Secondary or Primary. The English Schools, particularly some of the bigger secondary schools, are unquestionably the best schools in the country. They draw, as far as the complex state of affairs will allow, from the cream of the nation's children. They possess the best buildings, the best equipment and are infinitely better staffed, both in quality and number, than any other type of school. In fact the only education worth speaking about in Ceylon has been English education. But has English education been a success in this country?

We shall deal in due course with the main criticism of the present education obtaining in Ceylon, but here we may point out the faults in the structure of the school system. We use the word system with some hesitation because no plan or purpose seems to underlie the schools. Thus, though there are no schools at all in certain localities and a considerable proportion of the country's children are denied the blessings of education, altogether there are more schools than are required for a population of under six millions. In very broad figures, Ceylon had in 1938 over 6,000 schools for 800,000 pupils in a country with a total population of under six millions; England and Wales had over 22,000 schools for five million and a half pupils in a country with over forty one million people. In other words, the average number of pupils per school in Ceylon is only half that per school in England and Wales. There is no doubt that the uneconomic size of classes is the biggest single factor making for the high cost of education in this country. There are many little places where a number of schools compete with one another for securing the too few pupils, often bringing down not only school tone but the tone of local society. Then again many schools, whether English or otherwise, whether secondary

1 Schools preparing candidates for the S. S. C. (English) are defined as Senior Secondary, but as we have seen other schools also prepare for the same examination. Some of the Senior Secondary Schools are not allowed to present candidates for the H. S. C.

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or not, strive to secure pupils at as early an age as possible and retain them as late as possible.[1]

Let us take the typical example of a girl in a middle class family. She joins a large Girls' English School at the age of five and continues till 17. Her school life is one monotonous undifferentiated whole. As a child she fails to get the infant atmosphere so important for her training during the early years. She feels lost, being a tiny one in a school with so many older girls. In fact not being able to speak English, which the older ones use at play, she does not feel herself part of the school community. She does not get the stimulation which comes from the break in school life that should occur at 7 + and again at 11+. She does not get the initiative and independence which children in the top class of infant schools and primary classes should normally display. No, her school life is a dreary long period. Almost similar will be the experience of a boy. He may attend, say, a Tamil School in the neighbourhood at the age of five. At 8 he passes the third standard. If he is poor he continues a year or two longer and then fades away. Where his parents are willing to sacrifice his present earnings in the hope of making him a Tamil Teacher, he continues in the same school if post-primary classes can be provided there, that is if there are a few more boys like him. If, however, his parents have the means and the ambition, whatever be the ability of the boy, he is removed to, say, an English Secondary School on his passing his Tamil third standard. He continues there till his late 'teens and leaves school after passing the London Matriculation examination, which incidentally was not meant to be a school examination. During the last few years the Senior School Certificate examination has replaced London Matriculation. Neither in the case of our girl or boy has there been any selection at 11+ or at any other age for a course of English secon-

1 "The Code allows schools to start next door to an existing school if the new school can urge religious grounds. This multiplicity of schools has added to the cost of education though the most serious objection to a multiplicity of schools is not the increase of cost so much as the increase in friction in the village and decrease in the efficiency of the education provided."—*Report for 1938.*

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dary education. What mattered was parental means or social aspiration. But whatever one's ability or aptitude the only good secondary education available is in the English Secondary School. An English Junior Secondary School provides the same kind of education perhaps in a less satisfactory manner, but it is cheaper. The Bilingual course too is the same, but cheaper still. Thus these three types of schools are for the same type of pupils; to meet other tastes or talents of pupils or other types of needs of society there are really no schools. There is however a small redeeming feature connected with Sinhalese and Tamil schools. Several of these schools have adopted what is called a Rural Scheme and their activities include food production, cattle rearing and poultry-farming and the construction of small buildings. The so-called Industrial Schools provide a modest vocational training to about 2,000 pupils in all. But in the absence of selection and guidance and, more than that, in the absence of a unified school system, there can be no question of enabling "the right pupils to receive the right education."

This zig-zag ladder of our school system is partly due to the multiplicity of our school-leaving examinations conducted by various examining bodies, local and foreign, unrelated to one another. These examinations practically determine the curricula of the English Schools and the system of teaching. But really there is no justification for maintaining these different kinds of schools for giving the same kind of education. What is amazing is the variety of conditions under which this education is given. Taking the average of the figures for 1938 and 1939, before the war unsettled conditions, the gross cost of educating a pupil in an Assisted English Secondary School was Rs. 100 and the net cost, to Government, Rs. 39; in a Junior Secondary School, Rs. 64 gross and Rs. 30 net; in a Bilingual School, Rs. 34 gross and Rs. 29 net. The gross cost of a pupil in an English Primary School was Rs. 65 and in a Sinhalese or Tamil School, Rs. 19. The staffing of schools also reflected these differences, the number of pupils per teacher being about 21 in English Schools, whether Secondary or Primary, 35 in Sinhalese and Tamil Schools, and 45 in Government Sinhalese or Tamil Schools.

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A few further examples may be given of the waste and confusion involved in the present school-system. The Sinhalese and Tamil Schools of Ceylon have probably no parallel in the civilised world except perhaps in India. With mean books and meaner buildings, meagre equipment and mediocre teachers (apologies to a few bright ones here and there), these schools deny to the children of Ceylon their birthright such as their companions enjoy in other lands. Education here means, at best, the accumulation of words and rules and set ideas and on the whole conditions in these schools are calculated to starve childhood of its natural joys. Neither does the education here imparted fit the child to take his or her place in due time in a changing world. Social, political and economic changes are rapidly taking place in the country and the citizen is being increasingly called upon to face complex issues. In particular modern propaganda reaches him through such channels as the partisan newspaper, the political meeting and the radio, but the gift of the suffrage to all men and women has not been redeemed by the gift of knowledge. For the training in these schools hardly goes beyond the three R's and literacy, without education, is wasted schooling.

Even this training in literacy is of so short duration that there can be no doubt that a good proportion of the pupils who leave these schools do not acquire real literacy, or quickly lapse into illiteracy soon after leaving school. When pupils leave school too early they do not profit by the instruction received so far. This wastage in attendance is so heavy in Ceylon that the majority of pupils leave school before reaching the fifth standard, Sinhalese or Tamil. In other words, leaving out the large percentage of children who receive no schooling whatever, of those who go to school the majority fail to receive even a complete primary education [1].

There is still more meaningless wastage in the attempt to impart a working knowledge of English in the lower

1 According to figures for 1938, collected by the Department, 6·8 per cent of pupils in Standard II did not proceed to Standard III; 35·8 per cent did not proceed from Standard III to IV; 36·1 per cent did not proceed from Standard IV to V; 45·2 per cent did not proceed from Standard V to VI.

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classes of Sinhalese or Tamil schools[1]. The big question of when and to whom a foreign language may be taught will be dealt with in the next chapter; here it will be relevant to note that the introduction of English to all pupils in primary classes will not only be premature but wholly wasted on the great majority of pupils, who do not continue their English study up to a profitable stage. This course is not intended for those who proceed afterwards to English schools; and literacy in English will seldom be attained by those who do not go on to English Schools.

The system known as Special Classes in English schools is definitely educational stagnation for the pupils. Children arrive in these classes after three or four years in Sinhalese or Tamil schools and spend two or three years in going over in English practically the same ground which they have previously covered in their mother-tongue. Thus for a year or even two the lessons in arithmetic in the special classes do not increase very much the pupils' knowledge of number but become more or less exercises in language and translation. Still another example of faulty planning is the existence side by side of Bilingual Schools and English Junior Secondary Schools, with different emphases on languages, different types of teachers and scales of school-fees, both apparently leading to the same goal of the English Junior School Certificate.

Thd defect of the existing system is forcibly brought out by the poor examination results, pointing to much waste of youthful energy. In 1939 altogether 421 candidates entered for the Cambridge Senior examination, 367 sat and of these 174 were successful. For the London Matriculation examination, which though not a school examination has long been treated here as the regular School Certificate examination, 4,260 candidates entered, 3,122 presented themselves and only 865 passed. Roughly speaking, year after year, while in England 75% of candidates got their School Certificate at the first effort, here about the same percentage have gone under. But to compile the total casuality list of failed school careers we must also

1 This is the present policy of the Department. The article in the Year Book already referred to supports such English as an 'economic and social asset.'

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take into account the number of boys who have been in secondary schools for a number of years without ever being fit for the final examination and the number of girls who have quietly withdrawn from school at any stage when their studies have tended to lag behind their years. Wayside casualties are really enormous in this unequal struggle called English education and we conclude that for every pupil who gets something out of his English education there are many to whom it is a blind alley. For everyone who gets some grip of the English language there are many who have missed both English and their own mother-tongue.

It is on this perverse system, unsound educationally, uneconomic in organisation, that we spend one-fifth of the national revenue.

We may complete our picture of the present system of education by inquiring into the aims that have been behind the policy favoured. The Sinhalese and Tamil schools were no doubt intended primarily to provide literacy which was perhaps regarded as a social function of the state. From the point of view of the Government, the English schools served chiefly the purpose of obtaining a supply of the minor personnel of the administration.[1] The Ceylonese themselves quickly became aware of two main uses of English education, while to some a third value—the cultural—must have been clear. First, English education was a key to jobs which brought incomes, ten, twenty, even a hundred or two hundred times the income of the ordinary peasant. Secondly and connected with this extraordinary good fortune was the social prestige enjoyed by the English-educated office-holding class. One of the saddest features in Ceylon today is the contemptuous attitude of this class towards the peasantry and the peasantry's humble acquiescence in it[2]. The three reasons which an ancient Dean

1 Governor North wrote to the Directors of the E. I. Co., 1800: "...the three superior schools (established in Colombo) are likely to produce in a much shorter time than I expected a set of well qualified candidates of all the offices which are attainable by Burghers or by natives".

(Quoted in an article by H. A. Passe in the *University of Ceylon Review*, Nov. 1943.)

2 Sir Andrew Caldecott, Governor of Ceylon, in his *Despatch to the Secretary of State for Colonies*, 1938, says: "The Public Service looms far

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of Christ Church is said to have given for the study of Greek may well be applied to the study of English in Ceylon: "The first was that it enabled you to read the words of the Saviour (read, Rulers') in the original tongue; the second that it gave you a proper contempt for those who were ignorant of it; and the third was that it led to situations of emolument".

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too prominently in the thoughts and attentions of the Islanders. Employment under Government provides a social cachet which approaches almost to that of a ruling caste".

But this situation is really due to the disproportionately high salaries paid to public servants. This anti-social position is sought to be justified by the Retrenchment Commission, 1939, in the following remarks: "We appreciate the fact that our scales, particularly of the civil list class, are capable of further reduction on an absolute 'Ceylon standard' of remuneration judged by the rates of remuneration and conditions of employment available outside the Government service and we are not unmindful of the unostentatious standard of living of the high permanent officials of Whitehall. But the structure of society and recognized social values in London are different from those in Ceylon.... It is the fact that in Ceylon a Government servant has often to keep an 'official' and not a 'personal' standard of living".

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CHAPTER III.

LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION

The young life from birth to maturity may be broadly divided into two clearly defined periods, childhood lasting till 11+ and adolescence till 18. Slowly building up his body, his emotions, his will and his intellect, the child reaches the pseudo-maturity of a little man before puberty, and then nature, as if not satisfied with the perfection reached, starts all over again and builds up once more on similar lines reaching a more stable maturity towards the end of the second period. Childhood itself may be split up into two stages, early childhood ending at 7+ and late childhood at 11+. Hence we have the nursery and infant school for the stage of early childhood; the primary or junior school for late childhood; and the post-primary school, whether called secondary or otherwise, for the adolescent. These ages have been determined by a study of European children; for a climate like that of Ceylon where life is shorter and development quicker the age-limits may be placed slightly earlier. Everywhere the early years are no doubt the most vital in the growth of the individual.

How does language serve in the development of the child? To adults language is primarily a means of communicating ideas; but, with a Paul Robeson it is a means of sharing emotions, and indeed with all of us language has an emotional content too; sometimes, when in solitude we delve into ourselves, it serves as a vehicle of self-expression. The emphasis is otherwise with the growing child. The little one is as yet hardly separate from the mother and language is one of those intimate tissues with which the child preserves his bond with the mother. Language provides him with a wonderful experience on his entering into the world and serves admirably both his mother-and-other contact as well as the needs of his inner life. First he makes some sounds, he plays with them and even uses them associating certain movements and expressions with particular sounds. Next he tries out his own combinations of sounds into words and draws upon words from a dictionary of his own compilation; for truly the infant child is a resourceful adventurer of fortune in a society which he has not understood but to which he does not

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want to give in. Finally he learns the speech of man and uses it triumphantly both to promote his inner growth and his outer contacts. Early childhood as we have seen is a time when he develops the organs of his body and the texture of his feeling and will, and to achieve this purpose language serves as a splendid tool. The use of language helps to develop his speech organs; it is a rich emotional experience and it is a means of expressing his personality. Language is a kind of home or play-house for him serving him physically and spiritually and promoting his social development; language has a prophylactic and a therapeutic value in this organic growth. Thus, besides speech, singing and dancing come natural to the little child.

During early childhood the language of the child is, as Jean Piaget has shown in a remarkable study,[1] largely egocentric. Somewhere between the ages of 7 and 8 the child discovers a new use for language, to systematise his ideas, to communicate his thought and to join in a genuine argument. A new phase of his intellectual life commences now. He learns to think scientifically and to argue logically and to this end he begins anew to make a serious study of language. He continues to get his old pleasures out of language, but now while he yet waits on the threshold of adolescence he is dimly but definitely conscious of the need to get a masterly command of language, the most valuable of all the instruments of civilised man. The increasing achievement fills him with pleasure, but at the same time the task is arduous, taxing all his powers to acquire the arts of Reading and Writing and Conversation.

A child's native speech is the natural medium for his many sided growth. It is only the language of his mother that will serve his emotional development so important in childhood. It is this same language that he can successfully use for his intellectual development. For, as Dr. Michael West has observed:

> Language is not a mere means of expression. Language is an instrument of thinking. It is more than that; it is an instrument of feeling.... It is the stuff of which our selves are made; it is

[1] Jean Piaget: *The Language and Thought of the Child*, Kegan Paul, 1932.

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the most important of all formative influences in moulding not only the intellect, but the character also.[1]

H. N. Brailsford says :

One language only holds the key to our emotions; one language only conveys to us, sutely and instinctively, the subtler overtones of suggestion which its words possess. That is the language that we used at our mother's knee; the language of our first prayers and our first spontaneous outbursts of joy or grief. To make any other the vehicle of education is not merely to add immeasurably to the pupil's labours: it is to lame his mind in its freedom of movement.[2]

The poet Rabindranath Tagore remarks somewhere that :

Its mother-tongue is to youth what a mother's milk is to a child—only by following the stream of one's mother-tongue can one get to the sea of universal human culture.

The Sadler Commission was very definite on this issue :

The mother-tongue is the true vehicle of mother wit. ...It is through the vernacular that the new conceptions of the mind should press their way to birth in speech. This is almost universally true except in cases so rare (like that of Jos. Conrad) as to emphasise the general rule. A man's native speech is almost like his shadow, inseparable from his personality.... And it is through our vernacular, through our folk speech, whether actually uttered or harboured in our unspoken thoughts, that most of us attain to the characteristic expression of our nature and what our nature allows us to be or to discern. Through its mother-tongue the infant first learns to name the things it sees or feels or tastes or hears, as well as the ties of kindred and the colours of good and evil. It is the mother-tongue which gives to the adult mind the relief and illumination of utterance, as it clutches after the aid of words when new ideas or judgments spring from the wordless recesses of thought or feeling under the stimulus of physical experience or of emotion. Hence in all education, the primary place should be given to training in the exact and free use of the mother-tongue.[3]

It must be made clear that an adopted home language cannot take the place of the mother tongue. On the other hand, though children can easily pick up a foreign language, the process will contribute towards their retardation. I can

1 Michael West: *Language in Education*, Longmans, 1929.

2 In his Foreword to Som Nath Chib: *Language, Universities and Nationalism in India*, Oxford, 1936.

3 *Calcutta University Commission Report*, 1917.

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do no better than quote here the views of Professor Charlotte Buhler.[1] She was of opinion that to give the young child two languages was to place him in two homes, language being so personal to the child and a kind of home to him. The second language must not be introduced till the mother tongue was fully formed; otherwise children were made nervous and insecure. Dr. Buhler took the case of an English child whose parents may live in France, but who had a French nurse. Complications would set in because the child would get tied in language to (a) persons, by using English with parents and French with the nurse, (b) situations and (c) things, arising in the above circumstances. Thus the child would lose security and confidence in the use of language and the resulting hesitancy would retard his mental development. This great authority would go so far as to say that the child should not even come in contact with French children of his age because though that would help his social development he would lose the much greater advantage of developing in a single language. In other words, though little children will quickly pick up a second language that effort will definitely retard their mental development. Other observers have come to the same conclusion. Professor Laurie says:

> A child connot live equally well in two languages at one and the same time. If an attempt is made to make the child so its intellectual and spiritual growth is not doubled but halved.

Schuchardt says:

> If a bilingual man has two strings to his bow, both of them are rather slack.

The Colonial Secretary's Advisory Committee on Education reports:

> A dual personality moving in two separate worlds, professional and domestic, is a perplexing and not altogether satisfactory feature of bilingual education, likely to be most common in countries where women, on whom the home life depends, do not share the educational advantages of men. Still more perplexing is the situation when a child speaks two languages which spring from wholly different linguistic roots.... The psychological effect of

1 I have to apologise to Dr. Buhler for quoting her views contained in an unpublished course of lectures on 'The First Ten Years of Life' delivered at the Tavistock Clinic, 1939, which I had the pleasure of listening to.

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the repeated change-over from one medium of expression to another may be psychologically disruptive, because the background of the two languages is unlike in structure, metaphor, and feeling.[1]

Some observers have noted that there are physiological difficulties involved in the study of a foreign language, owing to differences in the mechanisms of eye movement. Thus the English eye accustomed to the Roman script and the horizontal lines running from left to right suffers a strain in reading the very different Chinese script. Whether this suggestion is far-fetched or not, there are undoubtedly inherent psychological difficulties which make it difficult for many to get a reasonable command of a foreign language, for any a perfect command of it. For behind the expressed language of words there is an unexpressed language of thought and feeling. Words are not mechanical tools; they are symbols charged with meaning. They are a kind of shorthand representing ideas and emotions that have a different shade of colour for different people according to their peculiar experience in history.

> Each word and each phrase embodies its own peculiar society of meanings, some dominant and sub-conscious, some of them conceptual ideas, some images, and some emotions. The whole society signified by a word-symbol invests the meaning of that symbol with a certain quality.[2]

West observes:

> A language is specially adapted to the nature of a people's thought. National language is peculiarly an expression of the colour of national thought.[3]

Madariaga observes:

> Languages are the most direct expression of national character.[4]

How far then is the gift for any particular language inherited by a people? Psychology does not of course assume that we

1. A *Preliminary Memorandum on the Aims and Methods of Language Teaching in the Colonies*, Colonial Office, London, 1930.
2. *Report on the Teaching of the Classics in England*, 1923.
3. Michael West: *Bilingualism*, Calcutta, 1926. Dr. West experimented with a passage from Jane Austin. Several eminent Bengalee professors took part in the process of translating the passage into Bengalee and then from Bengalee into English and so on. The final English was utterly unlike the original.
4. Salvador de Madariaga: *Englishmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards. An essay in comparative psychology*. Oxford, 1937.

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endowed at birth with any particular form of speech, it is acquired and, as we have seen, by strenuous effort. But modern psychology does assume on the one hand that we are endowed at birth with a particular temperament and that there is, with variations within, a thing called the national temperament and further that temperament has a physical basis also hereditary; and it assumes on the other hand that every particular form of human speech is charged with an emotional content and with a meaning too full for words, and therefore the speech of a particular people is the appropriate instrument of that people and that of no other. Thus the French language, abstract, precise and clear, expresses the logic so typical of French character, the empirical English language the nature of the Englishman, the man of action.[1] For one people to adopt another's language is like a man trying to wear another's clothes. It will just not fit.

The difficulty is inherent in the very method by which a foreign language has to be taught to young children. In the case of the English child studying English Dr. Susan Isaacs[2] pleads for oral work in the class room as the best preparation for written expression.

> The great need of the child in the Primary School is the chance to put his experience into words to describe, to discuss, and to argue. ... if we deprive him of free speech with his fellows, we take away from him one of the most valuable means of intellectual and social growth.... We insist on a dumb tongue, but hope for an eloquent pen!

We must remember too that language training for the child is not merely the preparation of an instrument for future use; it is a present vital experience and an end in itself. The English child thus acquires command of his native tongue in a natural manner. He hears but one language spoken all round him and he too uses the same language on every occasion. He delights to express himself

[1] Madariaga remarks, in the unique study already mentioned, how revealing words are as expressions of character: The German word, a voluminous encyclopaedia of the idea which it embodies; the Italian word, a relish which the speaker tastes and enjoys; the English word, a snapshot of the act; the French word, a diagram of the object; the Spanish word, the object itself four-square before our eyes.

[2] Susan Isaacs: *The Children We Teach*, London.

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in song and speech and writing and language adds to the fulness of his life. On the other hand the Ceylon child, except in the small proportion of cases where the parents have adopted English as their home language, is unable to talk in English at first and often is forbidden to use his mother-tongue at school for work or for play. So he grows up literally a dumb child and meanwhile acquires the English language, not as a joyful experience like his English companion, but as a painful effort; he gets it passively through his silent books and his solemn teacher, not actively through living use; he shams at the foreign language while the English child lives his language. And since he does not use his mother tongue, that ready vehicle of his young emotions, born to song among a people with a gift for music, he grows up with no sense for sound and no more are the joys of language for him. "With a wordless people and boyhood robbed of its colour box, inarticulate youth ebbs into unidealed age".[1]

Adolf Myers[2] points out "the humiliating gap between mind-age and word-age" of the Indian child learning English. A child picks up new words from social surroundings—his parents, his teachers, his daily companions, and from books. Everyday he picks up a few new words. According to Myers, the English child has a 5000-word start at the age of seven; at 11 the English child knows 8,500 words whereas the Indian child has picked up only 1,500 words after four years of English; at 15 the former knows 12,000 words compared with the latter's 3,000 words. It is possible the Ceylon child is surrounded with more English words than the corresponding Indian child and therefore his rate of assimilation of English words may be somewhat higher, but he is certainly at a considerable handicap if English is used as the medium of instruction.

[1] Compare what C. Kingsley-Williams says of West African children learning English: Learning to use a knife and fork is not the same thing as eating a meal.... They spend so much time learning to read a foreign language, that they have no time to read interesting things in a language which they read with ease; they spend so much time learning to speak a foreign language, that they have no time to talk about interesting things in a language which they speak with ease; they spend so much time learning to write a foreign language, that they have no time to write about interesting things in a language which they write with ease. *Teachers journal*, 1934.

[2] *Basic and the Teaching of English in India*, Bombay, 1938.

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Thus, from an examination of the place of language in the education of the child, we conclude that a child's mother tongue is the natural medium of his entire education and that all studies should centre round the mother tongue.

Languages other than the mother tongue have their place in education, though not as the medium of instruction. Foreign languages are of value in five ways. Firstly, there is mental training when you are able to observe relationships between that language and your own. Secondly, you increase your vocabulary when you study a kindred language and also obtain greater clarity and precision in the use of the mother tongue. Thirdly, you acquire "some understanding of the people who use that language and of their contribution to civilisation". Fourthly, a knowledge of a modern foreign language or the language of a neighbouring people may be a practical help in business and in life. Lastly, it is to the advantage of a small nation if some of its members acquire the languages of progressive bigger nations so that world currents in thought may be readily felt and absorbed into national life. All these benefits point to the study of any foreign language in an enlightened manner if it is to serve one or more of these purposes. Thus an English boy studying Latin must be able to make "constant comparison between Roman and British ideas, and between Latin and English methods of expression". It must be in view of these considerations that the Hadow Committee urged, "eleven is a suitable age at which to begin the study of a modern foreign language". The expectation of life is briefer and the development of children probably a little faster in our climate and 10+ would appear to be the appropriate age in Ceylon. English cannot, however, be taught to all our pupils, nor more than French can be taught to all pupils in post-primary schools in England. The Spens Report recommends that even for pupils in Secondary Schools, who are of superior intelligence, French should be dropped where the boys show no signs of an aptitude for languages. Educationists recognise that a foreign language is a valuable educational instrument with some pupils, but a blunt one with others. Where, however, pupils possess an aptitude for languages, it should be possible to teach several foreign languages. The Norwood Report,[1]

[1] *Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools*, London, 1943.

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while repeating the recommendation about the appropriateness of commencing a foreign language at the age of eleven, suggests the addition of further foreign languages at intervals of only six mouths. The mother-tongue should therefore be the only language of the primary school and the natural medium of all education, primary and secondary.

This conclusion is generally confirmed by a number of statistical investigations. One of the latest studies in bilingualism is an investigation by Arsenian into the intelligence and social background of bilingual children in New York City. In his comprehensive book the author summarises other outstanding work in the field, but rightly warns us to remember that conditions are generally different in different countries. He particularly points out that degrees of bilingualism differ widely, that differences between two languages may be much or little, and that the manner of teaching the second language and the age at which it is taught are important considerations. Saer and Smith tested school children and also undergraduates in Wales and found that monoglots showed a clear superiority over bilinguists by the Binet scale of intelligence. Similarly in Belgium the Walloon (unilingual) schools showed a noticeably higher mean performance than the Flemish (bilingual) schools. Again in Canada the poorest records in written English and French occurred in counties where both English and French were taught. But Arsenian's own research indicated that bilingualism did not influence the mental development of bilingual children of ages 9 to 14.

Michael West's experiments in Bengal led him to suggest that the Bengalee boy should first acquire the highest proficiency in his mother tongue and then study English with a view to being able to read books but not necessarily to express himself in English.

If a child's education is bilingual in its receptive aspect but unilingual in its expressive aspect, bilingualism is not necessarily a handicap.

Another interesting study is that of Paranjpe[2] who worked on the figures connected with the use of the mother

[1] Seth Arsenian: *Bilingualism and Mental Development* Columbia, 1937.

[2] M. R. Paranjpe: *Occasional Reports No. 16*, Government Press Calcutta, 1932.

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tongue as medium of instruction and examination in certain subjects for the Bombay Matriculation. The Bombay University has since 1926 allowed candidates the option of writing their answers in certain subjects in their mother tongue or in English. By 1930 about half the high schools, some of them among the best schools in the Presidency, had adopted the mother tongue as medium of instruction. Paranjpe's investigations have so far shown the following among other things:

(a) Those who answer the History paper in their mother tongue do, as a rule, fare better in the examination than those who answer it in English; (b) among the mother tongue group there are a large number of students who are taught in English but who prefer to write their answers in the mother tongue as they feel diffident of their power of expression in English.

On the lengthening of school life owing to the use of English as the medium of instruction, Mahatma Gandhi and the Wardha Committee[1] were of opinion that English added four years. The Hartog Committee[2] estimated that an Indian student had to devote one-third of his time to the study of English alone. The Punjab University Enquiry Committee[3] made a similar estimate, that "the time spent in obtaining mastery of English as a vehicle of instruction" was about one-third of the total period of education, and added "it is a grievous impediment to students that they still receive instruction in Western learning through the medium of a foreign language".

That the use of the English medium retards the average pupil and adds a number of years to the total period of schooling is borne out by the data collected by Perera in his study of the "Abilities of Ceylonese Children"[4]. Learning through the medium of English in an English Primary School retards the average boy by a year, according to Perera. But the average intelligence score of these boys was 20 marks higher than that of boys in Sinhalese and Tamil schools, a fact due

1. *Educational Reconstruction*, Vora & Co., Bombay, 1938.
2. *Report*, 1929.
3. *Report*, 1933.
4. This research is comprehensively reviewed in a *Report on Mr. H. S. Perera's Report* by K. Nesiah, 1941; also in articles in the *Ceylon Teacher* by E. Everatt and others, 1941 & '42.

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to the former being a selected group receiving also the better training. That is, very such superior boys have taken a year more to complete the fifth standard and yet made only an even score with boys in Sinhalese and Tamil schools in some of the achievement tests. Now, an achievement test must measure the result of intelligence plus application. That is, if intelligence is high and application is high, the achievement test must reveal high performance. We have already noted that the pupils in the English Schools are of superior intelligence compared with the pupils in other schools, the difference in the average scores being 20 marks. So that, if application has been equal in the two sets of schools, we should expect more or less the same difference to be maintained in the achievement test results as in the intelligence test results. But the standard of work is much higher in the English Schools. Therefore the difference in achievement must be greater than the difference in intelligence. As a matter of fact, however, there is hardly any superiority shown by the English school pupils in some of the achievement tests. In other words, considering their superior intelligence and superior schooling, not to speak of their higher age, there is considerable retardation in the case of these pupils. If therefore, the boys in both English and other schools had been of the same average ability and if both sets of schools maintained the same standard of work, it is probable that at least *another* year would have been added to the effective period of the former's primary schooling alone. We arrive at the same difference of two years if we compare the average of the top class of our primary school with that of the corresponding class in England. There is a further difference also. In England nearly 100% of *all* children proceed to the post-primary class before reaching their 12th birthday; in Ceylon only 51% of English School boys proceed to post-primary work before reaching their 14th birthday. Further, with many wayside casualities, a gradually dwindling army keeps marching on and, apart from a few early arrivals, the main body complete the School Certificate course at least three years later than their comrades in England and, as we have seen earlier, the casualties in the final onset at the S. S. C. examination are enormous. Does not the English medium retard?

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We have evidence given by competent persons on other results of educating through English in India. Sir Harcourt Butler[1] observed as follows:

> The boys who are taught through the medium of the vernacular until the highest stages of the high school are reached show markedly greater intelligence than those whose earlier education has been more largely conducted through the medium of English.

Sir George Anderson[2] wrote still more recently:

> It is a sad effect of the present system of education that though a certain number of gifted students speak and write English with remarkable fluency, the majority are losing the power to think and to express themselves in any language.

Michael West[3] sums up the effects of defective language training in the mother tongue as follows: Firstly, a certain emotional instability; secondly, a certain excess of negative attitudes, anti-something instead of patriotism, communal antagonisms; thirdly, a certain artistic sterility, but an excess of politics of a barren kind.

Of all the things we have lost as a result of neglecting the use of the mother tongue the saddest is the drying up of the fountains of originality in a people who have in past ages been profusely creative. For somewhat over a century Ceylon has paid attention to the acquiring of "English, more English and better English" as probably no other people ever attempted to acquire a foreign language. We have had some success as far as 'communication' in that language is concerned, but it has been for all that a blank century in our history. Of the boys and girls who read Shakespeare and Milton at school how many as men and women continue to love English literature, how many ever read a single English book after leaving school?[4] Of the many Ceylonese who speak and write to each other in English how many can speak and write that language idiomatically? Of the numerous prose and verse efforts scattered over school magazines and of the less

1 Evidence before the Sadler Commission.
2 *Report on the Progress of Education in India*, 1927–'32.
3 *Language in Education*.
4 London's libraries issue yearly 5 books per head of population; the leading dailies top the 2,000,000 mark in circulation. Denmark's leading daily has a half-million circulation.

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common but none the less unquenchable thirst for writing books in English is there yet any single example of a contribution to English letters?[1] And where are the thinkers of the nation? Normally we think with the help of language and where we lack the native language even where thoughts stir in men's hearts they must die unexpressed. Nor is this failure to create confined to thought and literature; there has been little creation in art or science or industry. Rabindranath Tagore laid his finger on Ceylon's weak spot:

> You indulge in the vanity of mastering a language which is not of your heart and of your birth-right, which does not belong to your past nor to your future, and owing to that obsession in her children, your country is waiting in vain for her wealth of literature which only can help her to discover her own soul and to bring out the treasure lying hidden in the lightless corner of her mind.[2]

But in the new order we look forward to, where the growing youth of the Nation experiences the fulness of the joy of his own language and wields his language with confidence and enthusiasm, while not neglecting to open the windows of foreign languages into the outside world, we may hope for a "new outburst of intellectual life when throughout their education they think and express themselves in the vernacular".[3] For as the Sadler Report says "the mother tongue is the very breath and substance of poetry and of national feeling". Then will a hundred years of learning not end in a stagnant pool, but will well up into fresh fountains of creative thought and writing, invention and achievement. Then will the junction of the foreign tributary with the native stream, instead of choking the flow, increase the stream and help to bring thought from the distant countries for the fertilisation of local life. If then Ceylon is to enter into new life she must first revive her national languages.

1 Note what Prof. E. F. C. Ludowyk of the University of Ceylon says: It might have been possible to justify the expense of time, money and opportunity which has gone into the building of this illusionary pseudo-English middle class world of Ceylon, the nirvana of the Civil List officer, if the illusions had been sufficiently credible, and the pseudo-English even a little intelligent. Unfortunately it is difficult to credit the one or to support the other. *Jaffna College Miscellany*, Dec., 1939

2 Compare Maculay's statement: No noble work of imagination was ever composed by any man except in a dialect which he had learned without remembering how, and which he had spoken with perfect ease before he had ever analysed its structure.

3 Canon Holland's evidence before the Sadler Commission.

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CHAPTER IV.

EDUCATION AND THE NATIONAL TRADITION

Man is not ruled by logical ideas, nor [illegible] science and its findings dominate the affairs of men. [illegible] nowhere do we find an ideal system of education based all square on the data provided by the science of psychology. If we really want to discover the roots of social institutions we must look in the soil of past history. It is in this rich and congenial soil of history that the seeds of future growth will germinate. This truth may be well illustrated by the case of Mahatma Gandhi. From the time of Raja Ram Mohun Roy for over a century many eminent Indians have crossed the stage of her modern history. Schooled in Western traditions, versed in the politics of democracy and filled with fervent love of country these men did signal service to India. But not one of them reached the heart of the people, not one of them was able to make of the national movement the irresistible force it is today. Yet Gandhi has achieved this miracle of infusing new life into a nation of nearly 400 millions who had lapsed into abject stupor. He was able to do this because he came back from their own past; he is his people. So Romain Rolland[1] sees his work:

> His doctrines are an expression of the deepest and most ancient longings of the race. For if there is such a thing as genius, great by its own strength whether or not it corresponds to the ideals of its surroundings, there can be no genius of action, no leader, who does not incarnate the instincts of his race, satisfy the need of the hour, and requiet the yearning of the world.... He called upon the great shadows, the forces of the past plunged in mortal lethargy, and at the sound of his voice they came to life. In him they found themselves. Gandhi is more than a word; he is an example. He incarnates the spirit of his people.

This too is the secret of good education. To be successful any education must interpret the past. No doubt its mode of interpretation will differ from age to age. No doubt since history is a living and yet growing past the interpretation will become richer from age to age. But it will still remain the modern rendering of an ancient culture. Sometimes the ideas of a community may

[1] Romain Rolland: *Mahatma Gandhi*, Geo. Allan & Unwin.

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gradually change or find new expression, or the past may have to be purified of its dross, but the process can be achieved only by a social education taking account of the past. Any successful education must take full account of the national temperament and the national tradition. It must derive its sanctions from the counsels of the past.

John Dewey has, in one of his most remarkable books[1] emphasized the need for a 'philosophy of experience'. He has shown that true education is not imposition from without, it is the directing of the experience of the young. No education can take place unless what is learned is within the range of the pupil's experience. Such educational experience involves continuity and interaction, continuity with past experience and interaction between the learner and what is learned. In other words, the true learning situation is both historical and social, orderly and dynamic. Now a system of education based upon the necessary connection of education with experience must constantly take into account the "condition of the local community, physical, historical, economic, occupational, etc., in order to utilize them as educational resources".[2]

There is no more eloquent witness than England to the truth that a nation finds her genius in her native tradition. There was a time when that country came under the spell of Latin. For centuries the Church made it the sacred language, scholars studied the classics and gifted Englishmen essayed to create a neo-Latin literature in England. Meanwhile, after the Norman conquest, French also came into the country

1 John Dewey: *Experience and Education*, Macmillan, N. Y., 1938.

2 If we accept this view, which is really fundamental to sound education, we shall realise how much of our English poetry teaching is hardly 'education of experience, by experience' at any rate for the great majority of Ceylon pupils. Thus, say, Kipling's "River's Tale" will have little meaning for the pupil because its subject-matter is so foreign to his experience; but a similar tale of the Malvatu Oya and that in Sinhalese or Tamil will come home to him in the same way as Kipling's poem will appeal to the English boy. When you go to Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales", written in the English of 550 years ago, it becomes still more irrelevant to our pupil's experience though he may get up the poem with the help of an annotated edition.

Compare Sir Percy Nunn's remarks on play. "Play is the purest expression of motor heredity", he quotes Stanley Hall and adds: Our native dances, now rescued with the old songs from the wreck of time, may be a better medium for the physical culture of the young Anglo-Saxon than the saltatory idioms of the Latin races or the Slavs or the Negroes.

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and especially into the Court, English taking a humble place as the speech of the lower orders. But neither in Latin nor in French could any great literature be created in England and, apart from some quickening of thought, those two currents do not belong to the main stream of English life and letters.

Roger Ascham had written in 1545: "And as for ye Latin or Greke tongue, everything is so excellently done in them, that none can do better; In the English tongue contrary, every thing in a maner so meanly, both for the matter and handelynge, that no man can do worse". The famous English translation of the Bible known as the Authorised Version appeared in 1611. Between these two dates epoch-making events had taken place. English had come back into its own and the greatest of English writers wrote during this period using the native language. Indeed this was the time when England re-discovered herself. An unbounded patriotism swept over the land. National greatness was at its peak. The national Church was established. And English literature received such rich contributions from English writers that it advanced from being, in Roger Ascham's day, one of the meanest in Europe to a place worthy to be ranked among European literatures beside Greek. Since then the English tradition has continued unbroken in England. The essence of that tradition has been the use of the English language; for as Professor Judd has noted:

> Languages are carriers of literature. Literatures in turn are embodiments of the national history of the peoples who produced them. Literatures are to society what individual memory is to each one of us.

What is the place of the schools in relation to the national tradition? Sir Percy Nunn answers the question as follows:

> A nation's schools (including the universities), we might say, are an organ of its life, whose special function is to consolidate its spiritual strength, to maintain its historic continuity, to secure its past achievements, to guarantee its future.[1]

According to this ideal the schools should serve as the torch-bearers of the traditions of the community. School

[1] *Education: Its Data and First Principles*, Arnold, 1936.

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life and study should be based on the mother-tongue, national history and national ideals. The schools of England demonstrate how this ideal has been consciously carried out in that country. The Spens Report reaffirms this ideal in these eloquent words:

> The intellectual and other activities to be specified are, we have said, to represent or reflect what is of highest and most permanent significance in the life and traditions of the community. By the 'community' we mean here, in the first instance, the national community of whose life the schools are a part. It is true that the elements which have the highest and most permanent significance for our national life are not, in general, things denied to other nations; they have the highest value and significance for the human family as a whole. But for education one needs the influence of a concrete tradition or way of life, and there can hardly be said to be a common human tradition. There is, undoubtedly, a common Western European tradition, derived mainly from the Graeco-Roman civilisation as it was transformed by Christianity, and one of the chief functions of secondary teaching is to make boys and girls conscious of it and regard it as something to be reverenced and preserved. But the right way to do this is to begin by making them conscious of that tradition as it exists in their own country. Hence the importance of fostering in our schools the special traits of the English character at its best; of giving English letters a chief place in the studies of youth; and of cherishing English traditions in the arts and crafts, including our once proud art of music. To speak thus is not to accept the ignorant and presumptuous doctrine that we have nothing to gain or learn from other nations. On the contrary our pupils should discover, as occasion offers, how much our national development owes, in many of its aspects, to the influences of other peoples, should learn to respect great civilisations which are widely different from our own, and should understand how essential international co-operation has become to the progress of science and invention and the applications of knowledge and skill in increasing the health, wealth and convenience of mankind. Nevertheless, *the national tradition in its concrete individuality must, for the reasons adduced, be the basis of an effective education.*[1]

Leaders of English educational thought have uttered the most fervent warnings against any tendency to forget that the right basis for English education is Western culture. Thus Sir Richard Livingstone.

1 *Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education*, 1938.

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If we were Indians or Chinese, it might be otherwise; but our origin and traditions are different; we can learn from the East but we belong to the civilisation of the West and shall neither understand nor master it, if we are ignorant of the rock from which we are hewn.[1]

In his address to the American Association for the Advancement of Science[2], Mr. Walter Lippmann criticises American education as ceasing to be education for rejecting the classical-religious tradition in favour of modern science:

The emancipated democracies have renounced the idea that the purpose of education is to transmit Western culture. Thus there is a cultural vacuum, and this cultural vacuum was bound to produce, in fact it has produced, progressive disorder. For the more men have become separated from the spiritual heritage which binds them together, the more has education become egoist, careerist, specialist and asocial.

In sad contrast to the ideals advocated by these thinkers and to the systems generally obtaining in the West, is our own education in Ceylon and to a decreasing extent Indian education. As Ceylon followed the example of India in introducing English education we may inquire why English education was imposed on India. For one thing there was need to secure clerks for the service of the East India Company. For another the Directors of the Company thought "there was little in Hindu or Muhammadan literature that is useful".[3] Lord Macaulay, who had even greater contempt for Indian culture, wrote: "We must do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern: a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, words and intellect", and he looked forward to the English connection with India being thereby firmly and for ever established.[4] C. E. Trevelyan, his devoted kinsman, was equally confident that the natives "stimulated by the prospect of honourable and lucrative employment could not fail to be struck by our moral and intellectual superiority", and he too saw in English education the only possible means of converting what was at the time but a precarious into a permanent connec-

1 *Education for a World Adrift*, Cambridge, 1944.
2 1940.
3 *Despatch*, 1824.
4 *Minute*, 1835.

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tion.[1] Both of them saw in language the key to the situation, Macaulay opining that the "uprooting of a vernacular was the extermination of a race".

William Mc Dougall[2] points out the folly of Macaulay and others in ignoring the fundamental importance of race and of national character. So does Arthur Mayhew, formerly of the Indian Educational Service :

> This substitution of one culture for another has not been as a watchword educationally effective....the most effective education is that which represents the efforts of a community to impose its cultural life with its ideas and aspirations on the rising generation.[3]

Another eminent student of Indian culture, Lord Zetland, deplores that

> the whole system of education is completely divorced from Indian culture and tradition.[4]

Lord Zetland quotes in this connection the testimony of an experienced educationist, Rev. T. Vander Schueren, S. J.:

> Take what is best and most effective in the Western system and in as much as they are adaptable adapt them to the East ; but these can only be accessories ; the essential and more substantial parts of the Indian system must be Indian and suited by their nature to the nature of the Indian mind.

A similar criticism of Ceylon education was made by Rev. A. G. Fraser :

> Imagine a code in this 20th century which almost ignores their own history to teach them that of their conquerors, which forgets their classics to introduce them to Latin, which instructs them in the problems of the West and scarcely attempts to throw light on those of the East ; which training them for clerkships and law, forgets to show them the duty and beauty of service to their Motherland.[5]

The most gifted Indian minds have not been slow to note the futility of this unnatural system. C. R. Das observed as follows :

> The education which we now receive is a borrowed and imitated article ; it does not co-operate with the natural genius of our being, and hence is unable to enrich the life-blood of our soul.

1. *Education of the People of India*, 1838.
2. *Group Mind*, Cambridge, 1920.
3. *Education of India*, Faber & Gwyer, 1928.
4. Ronaldshay : *The Heart of Aryavarta*, Constable, 1925.
5. In a report written in 1908. The criticism still holds in 1945.

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Sarojini Devi, the Indian poetess and patriot, said :

> We are today no more than the futile puppets of an artificial and imitative system of education, which is unsuited entirely to the special trend of our social genius. It has robbed us of our proper mental values and perspectives and deprived us of all true initiative and originality in seeking authentic modes of self-expression.[1]

But under the powerful impact of the national movement, India is now actively re-ordering her education. At once experimental and national, progressive and planned, Indian education is increasingly contributing towards the modern renaissance in India. With Ceylon however it is yet otherwise. The whole orientation is not merely to uphold but extol English culture as the best for Ceylon. There are still prominent places of learning in our country, run with the people's purse and patronage, where Ceylon boys and girls are deliberately taught to look down upon their people and their culture. In these big schools our children are made to believe that "they are inferior beings belonging to an inferior race, speaking an inferior language and inheriting an inferior tradition and that all the best things are elsewhere and not here in their own country."[2]

These queer educators little realise that

> the lack of a sturdy race-pride affects a boy's development, as it tends to undermine his national and personal self-respect, which is the ground work of character.[3]

The effeminacy that is characteristic of the English educated class in this country must be traced to that training that destroys self-respect. The same source of weakness will explain the lack of fibre in many of our officials and public men. For English education in Ceylon, to the extent that it is contemptuous of our own culture, is subversive of character. Character is not a ready made commodity that schools may retail. If the public schools of England give a training in character to English boys they do not claim to stock the ingredients of character in isolation of the country. Rather the schools of England may be regarded as the well-conditioned garden where the whole English inheritance blossoms

1. At the Cawnpore Congress, 1925.
2. L. H. Methananda in *Young Ceylon*, January, 1939.
3. Saer: *Bilingual Problem*.

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into English character. If the strength of England lies in her sons the strength of her sons is in turn due to their being Englishmen. It is as if England comes to birth in each individual Englishman. The spirit of England broods over him wherever in the wide world he goes. The Englishman is in fine an epitome of England.

Those who think they can implant English character in the Ceylonese by transplanting English culture here little realise that that culture will at best remain a hot-house plant. They delude themselves if they believe that by acquiring a foreign language and a foreign style of living they can absorb that culture.[1] Dr. Michael West points out "the fallacy that if one learns English, he will acquire English culture." He notes that some men know a foreign language and precious little else and adds, with some sarcasm, that 'if just learning to speak a foreign language is the criterion waiters are the best educated of men. But the English educated intelligentsia of Ceylon must have some pretensions to culture. So they practise a pseudo-culture, which consists not in fine feeling and high thinking, not in the creating or enjoying of art and literature, not in the cherishing of ideals and values, but in the copying of Western modes in dress and language and manners. The fact of the matter is they have fatally confused with culture, which is values, civilisation, which is technique. Using the tools of Western civilisation is not the same thing as being animated by the spirit of the West. To feel the thrill of the European spirit is to be engaged in the study and application of the sciences, Natural and Social. This has hardly been felt in Ceylon.

Besides the British connection is not an eternal decree of Providence. The time may come, even in our generation, when we become a self-governing dominion; it is even possible that when the world undergoes its secular variations of fortune we may find ourselves willy nilly a free nation. It is not impossible, should the present war continue long, that Western

[1] Compare what Tacitus says of the Britons under Agricola: Then he began to give the sons of the chieftains a liberal education....with the result that a nation which had lately rejected the Roman language was now eager to learn eloquence. Next even our manner of dress became a distinction, and the toga was frequently to be seen. Gradually they turn aside to the things which make vice seductive, porticoes, baths, and luxurious banquets. This was called by the simple culture, when it was merely a part of their slavery.

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civilisation may go under. "The King makes time" as the Sanskrit proverb hath it; but when the ruler has departed shall we still go after his culture? If India is a lesson to us, or Ireland, or for that matter any country that is realising her freedom, shall we not in the days that are to be vie with one another in swearing loyalty to the national culture? Let us then not now make a weather-cock of education, but base it on the eternal needs of the nation. Education is concerned with the living past; it is concerned with the coming future; it is concerned with the passing present only so far as the present harmonises with the past and the future. And it is concerned with the individual who is the inheritor of an individual and social yesterday and who is the herald of tomorrow!

If then we would fill the young mind with a burning desire for noble effort and successful achievement, if we would call forth original creation in poetry or art, science or industry, if we would raise up a race of patriotic men and women, then we must make the pride of the past pulsate in the nation's veins and the glory that has been must inspire the glory to be. If we would thus revive the nation, then we must re-make our education. We must make it in our own manner using the mould of national schools; we must use the precious metal of our own languages; we must put on the coin of our new culture the stamp of our own inheritance, and in this national mint of our education patriotic teachers alone will be the skilled and trusted craftsmen. At the same time we shall not refuse to hold commerce with the world, for a nation's life would be mean and miserable if she should deny herself a share in the world's wonderful wealth of spiritual and material goods. Indeed a national education for the nation's children in national schools will fit them the more to understand and appreciate the thought and writing, the art and achievement, of the best that this world knows. In fact the possession of a sound educational currency will give the nation a wider credit in the cultural markets of the world than when she conducts her international trade on the loan capital of a foreign education. Briefly, a national education, liberal and modern, will be the best means of securing to the individuals of the nation a fuller life and to the nation itself true progress.

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CHAPTER V.

LANGUAGE AND THE NATION

What is a nation? Many factors go to the making of a nation, but the essential thing is the possession of a common national sentiment, the members sharing a sense of belonging one to another and sharing common aspirations for the future. Julian Huxley points out that nationality depends on cultural, not biological, characteristics:

> In considering the characters of different nationalities it will generally be found that the distinctive qualities upon which stress is laid are cultural rather than physical and, when physical, they are very often physical characters that have been produced or influenced by climatic and cultural conditions.[1]

"A nation is a nation because its members passionately and unanimously believe it to be so," says Ramsay Muir and adds that,

> Nationality, since it is not solely or even mainly based upon racial homogeneity, can be nursed into existence, even where most of the elements of unity are to begin with lacking.[2]

William Mc Dougall, the eminent psychologist, would define nationality in terms of mental organisation resting on tradition:

> The answer to the riddle of the definition of nationhood is to be found in the conception of the group mind. A nation, we must say, is a people or population enjoying some degree of political independence and possessed of a national mind and character, and therefore capable of national deliberation and national volition.[3]

Mc Dougall agrees that this mental homogeneity, analagous to the esprit de corps in a school or an army, can be acquired and mentions the American nation as an example of acquired homogeneity. To recall a remark of Julian Huxley, the family has been produced by Nature, the nation by Man himself.

What is the value of nationality? We may quote the last named writer once again:

1 'Race' in Europe, Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs, 1939.
2 *Nationalism and Internationalism*, Constable, 1919.
3 *The Group Mind*.

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The idea of nationality has yielded as fruit that patriotism which has proved itself one of the strongest forces known to history, second perhaps only to religion.

In a sermon sometime ago Dean W. R. Matthews[1] pleaded for patriotism. We owe so much to the community in which we are born, in the shape of protection, freedom and culture; even our religion owes something to the national community and Christianity comes to Englishmen flavoured by the tang of England. And he repeated the poet's line, "Who lives, if England dies?"

Dean Inge speaks of the value of patriotism for man:

> There is one remedy in which I do not believe—to scrap patriotism altogether, and be citizens of the world. Patriotism is far too good a thing to lose. It is about the purest and noblest emotion of which the ordinary man is capable. And not the ordinary man alone. Did not the thought of the fate of Jerusalem bring the rare tears into the eyes of Christ?[2]

Mc Dougall puts the matter in terms of group psychology:

> The group spirit raises the conduct of the mass of men above the plane of simple egoism or family selfishness ...Loyalty to the nation is capable of exalting character and conduct in a higher degree than any other form of the group spirit.

We must really see, with Professor G. P. Gooch, that the nation, like the family, is one of the pillars of civilisation.

To speak thus of the nation is not to concede any belief in the supremacy of the Nation as an ultimate human ideal. Nor need we affirm the inviolability of the Sovereign State.[3] Certainly the nation is a real thing and a convenient unit with which to start the business of creating a new world order; but racialism is a different thing, it is a dangerous myth, to use the words of Julian Huxley. Owing, however, to the theory of the metaphysical State put forward, notably in Germany, and interpreted into immoral action, and owing too to the imperialistic policies followed by many nations in

1 The Warburton Lectures on Christianity and War at Lincoln's Inn Chapel, which I had the pleasure of listening to. This was a few months before the outbreak of the War.

2 *The Causes of War*. Geo. Allen and Unwin, 1938.

3 The hesitation on the part of the great powers to surrender any part of their National Sovereignty is one reason for the failure of the League of Nations.

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dealing with others, men have tended to confuse nationalism, which is a fine thing, with racialism which is a wicked thing. But to want to do away with nationalism because of false nationalism is like the proposal of the reformer in R. L. Stevenson's story whose only hope of reforming humanity was to abolish it. Actually however nationality is a source of peace, internal and international. War is caused by the denial of the principle of nationality, that is, when one nation seeks to deprive another of its nationhood. Nationality, it has been said, is a necessary link, between man and humanity. Other ties are false or faulty, but the territorial tie is the most natural and most desirable tie for the purpose of international relationship. As Dean Inge observes, "If they love not those whom they have seen, how shall they love those whom they have not seen?" After quoting this, Mc Dougall comments:

> Loyalty to humanity can be realised only through patriotism; any other road is bound to fail.

He is even more positive when he speaks of the group spirit as the main agent of progress.

To revive the cry of race within a country is to revive a dangerous myth; to want the frontiers of religion coincide with the fictitious frontiers of race is the cry of despair; to sow the seeds of class hatred is to sow the dragon's teeth; to do anything to divide the people of a country politically is treason to the country, but to deprive a nation of its individuality is treason to humanity. Every nation should preserve the local cultures and crafts that enrich the nation, but the preservation of the individuality of nations is indispensable to human progress. As C. Delisle Burns puts it:

> ... as the destruction of individuality may destroy genius, so the attempt to make all groups of men exactly alike in their customs or creeds may destroy some special character of endurance or wit which may be developed even in a small nation. There is some special quality in every group which it would be well for the sake of the whole of humanity to preserve

The greatest patriots have supported this view. Joseph Mazzini was no narrow-minded patriot:

> Humanity is the association of nationalities; the alliance of the peoples in order to work out their missions in peace and love, the organization of free and equal peoples that shall advance without hindrance or impediment—each supporting and profiting by the

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[illegible]'s aid—towards the progressive development of one line of the thought of God....To forget humanity is to suppress the aim of our labours. To cancel the nation is to suppress the instrument by which we achieve the aim.

C. R. Das the Indian patriot spoke almost the same language:

I contend that each nationality constitutes a particular stream of the great unity, but no nation can fulfil itself unless and until it becomes itself and at the same time realizes its identity with humanity.

Gandhi is the unique example of the perfect blending of patriot and world citizen:

I want the freedom of my country so that the resources of my country may be utilized for the benefit of mankind.

And again:

I will not hurt England or Germany to serve India.

We may perhaps conceive of our loyalties as a series of concentric circles with the individual at the centre. The innermost circle would be the family, the nation would be a large and clearly defined circle, but humanity would be the outermost one. The two-fold aim of education may be described as the achievement of the individuality of the pupil and the right ordering of his loyalties.

The idea of nationality has been dwelt on at some length because of its present significance for Ceylon; for as Professor Zimmern says somewhere, a vast reservoir of spiritual power is lying ready, in the form of national feelings, to the hands of teachers and statesmen and that to seek to ignore or stamp out this force is to promote spiritual impoverishment. And in the evolution of nationhood language is a supreme factor. Says Professor Holland Rose:

A people cannot attain to its full powers until its thoughts and aspirations are wedded to a mother tongue, until that mother tongue ceases to stammer and learns to sing.

Or as Herder says:

Has a people anything dearer than the speech of its fathers? In its speech resides its whole thought-domain, its traditions, history, religion and basis of life, all its heart and soul. To deprive a people of its speech is to deprive it of its one eternal good.... The best culture of a people cannot be expressed through a foreign language;

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it thrives on the soil of a nation most beautifully, and, I may say it thrives only by means of the nation's inherited and inheritable dialect.

Or again in the words Ahad Ha' Am :

A nation has no national language except that which was its own when it stood on the threshold of its history, before its national self-consciousness was fully developed, that language which has accompanied it through every period of its career and is inextricably bound up with all its memories.

A language serves a nation in two important ways. Firstly, the native languages alone can stimulate and enrich the creative life of the nation, serve to discover her peculiar genius and thus help to achieve her individuality among the nations of the world. Secondly, the national languages play an indispensable part in the growth of nationhood, in a twofold manner. On the one hand the national sentiment is nurtured and nourished by the mother tongue and the poetry and song of that tongue. On the other hand the homogeneity of the nation is promoted by freedom of communication mediated by language; the various parts of the nation becoming conscious of one another by the currency of a common language. This unification process again takes place in a twofold way, horizontal and vertical. Horizontally, that is geographically, the various parts of the country are brought into intimate touch with one another by the free use of a common language or common languages throughout the country from end to end. Vertically, that is socially, the various grades of society are knit together into one solid fellowship by means of common speech. We may here remember that even in a unilingual country like England the difference in accent between different social classes is a "formidable barrier between them". Sir Percy Nunn suggested therefore that,

The primary school can help the cause of social solidarity in no more practical way than by working to raise the standard of speech among their pupils, so that we may become a people who have at least the first requirement for mutual understanding—a common language.[1]

Since then the schools and other agencies have worked to increase this social asset of good English speech.[2]

1 *Education: Its Data and First Principles.*
2 George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* has also stressed this message.

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It is often urged by superficial observers that the English language promotes the unity of Ceylon. This is only partly true; we may in fact say that English does not help to unify the nation but that it divides. No doubt it promotes understanding among the English educated office-holding middle class. On the other hand English education has had a serious anti-social result in fixing a gulf between the English educated official class and the rest of the people. The professions and public services are rapidly tending to become a social caste and to look upon their life and interests as quite apart from that of the others whatever their wealth or culture. This tendency was deplored by Dr. West when he said that education which should be the great mixing rod of the melting pot became an Unmixer, stirring in petty baseless distinctions and ill-feelings. One may go further and see in the division of our society into the English educated class and the rest a close parallel to the division of Western industrial society into capitalists and workers. Our aristocracy of the pen and tongue live on the people just as much as the owners of capital elsewhere; but unlike their foreign counterparts our office-holding magnates spurn their countrymen and would deny them the civil and social rights that are everyman's in European countries. Thus arises a parodoxical situation. On the one hand English education has been the means of bringing modern democratic ideas to Ceylon; on the other the English educated class, even those members of it who have been to the West, would uphold the privileges of their class and oppose the extension of practical democracy in the country. Language is so strong a class barrier that even legislators, elected on universal suffrage, display greater keenness to protect the privileges of the former class than to promote the interests of the latter. Still another grave result of this social dualism is the failure of the more educated to contribute towards the thought and life of the less fortunate. This sterile attitude has not been without its reaction on the educated class; where they should have served as channels flowing full with the water of knowledge they have remained stagnant pools.

Thus language and education play a vital part in the making of a nation. Indeed that is the right way of social progress. It is so much better to create in individuals the

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desire for better things and provide them with the social means of achieving those desires than to use, as revolutionaries in search of short cuts would, the anti-social method of what is called social revolution. In the present circumstances of Ceylon it is not English and English education but the national languages and national education that is going to bring about the geographical and social unification of the country.

The extraordinary proposition that a foreign language, adopted as a second language by one hundred per cent of the people, should become the unifying factor in Ceylon is advocated by the Special Committee on Education.[1] "We therefore recommend that it (English) should be universally taught so that, apart from other reasons, by becoming a common second language it may cease to be a badge of class distinction and become a means of common understanding". Is the proposal practicable? Is the proposal likely to achieve its purpose? Is it a desirable objective? When, in spite of the operation of compulsory education for nearly four decades, hardly half the population has attained to effective Sinhalese or Tamil literacy, it is a far cry to think of achieving 100% English literacy! It just won't happen. The Special Committee themselves say they are "proposing an experiment which is normally not tried elsewhere". Even assuming this done, it will be so imperfectly done, that there will be the class distinction between those who speak the bazaar English of the Practical Schools and those who speak the better English, but still Ceylonese English, of the Secondary Schools. We have already seen that even in the country where English is native speech, differences in accent threaten to constitute a social barrier between classes. That instead of the Sinhalese on the one hand and the Tamils and Moors on the other learning each other's language they should adopt a third language is as unwholesome a proposal as its political counterpart that instead of all sections of Ceylonese agreeing upon a constitution they should invite a third power to rule over them all. Indeed educational policy is vitally linked with national politics and, when everything is said, the proposal to make English the dominant language assumes permanent British domi-

[1] *Report*, 1943.

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nation of Ceylon. Far from promoting our nationhood, English will promote, and is intended to promote, our slavery.

The slogan of universal English is therefore bound to fail; but national needs, based on economic and political inter-dependence, point to the adoption of a progressive language policy to enable Ceylon to play its full part in the post-war world. The main languages of Asia and Europe, particularly the important languages of India, have a claim upon our attention owing to their utilitarian as well as cultural value. Of modern Indian languages, Hindustani, and of European languages, English, have special claims. None of these, however, need be universally adopted. The classical languages of India should occupy the same place which Latin and Greek occupy in Britain and modern foreign languages the place which French, German, Spanish, Italian and, of late, Russian occupy in English education.

The national languages alone serve to enrich, inspire and unify the nation; but the practical requirements of good government also point to the use of the national languages for State purposes. The gift of universal suffrage makes it particularly imperative to educate the citizen in his own language so that he may wisely exercise his citizenship. And equally important as the education of the 'masters' is the education of the 'public servants' in the language of the 'masters'. It is a grievous wrong to the people that the administration of the country should be conducted in a language foreign to the people and not the mother-tongue of the large majority of the officials. For at the present day we no longer look upon public administration as merely a way of securing law and order but as a great creative service to further the welfare of the citizens. And the better performance of the political, social and economic services of the State points to the use of the people's own language.

The use of a foreign language in administration explains in part the failure of government departments to be responsive to the people and also the failure on the part of the rural and labouring classes actively to co-operate in the business of government. The individual government officer often acquires a complex, his foreign language and foreign dress being two of the many ingredients of this complex, that he

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ceases to have the friendly human contact that is necessary to persuade the peasant to accept a new idea in agriculture or to adopt a higher standard of hygiene. If the adoption of a foreign language has been a stumbling block to the better appreciation of the economic and social services of the State, it has inevitably curtailed the better enjoyment by citizens of their civil and political rights. An example may be taken from the system of provincial administration. A European Civil Servant is usually, though not always, the head of the Provincial Kachcheri. His immediate assistants are generally Ceylonese while all sub-ordinate officers are always so. It looks as if hundreds of officers and thousands of members of the public have to use English to transact business for the sake of the one or two officers at the top. These officers, whether Englishmen or Ceylonese, are provided with one or more highly paid interpreters, who serve as means of contact with the local headmen and with the general public. Incidentally by the nature of this ususual job the interpreters become the "key" men in the affairs of the province. Meanwhile, the public have to avail themselves of the services of unreliable petition-drawers and translators to frame their communications to any official, Ceylonese or European. If they have to approach these officials, who speak English and dress in European style, they are made to forego their birthright of self-respect. The absurdity of the whole system need not be pointed out further.[1] But the worst example of the injustice of the system is provided by the courts of law. An instance will serve. An accused in a murder case, who was a Sinhalese, made a statement in the lower court before a Burgher magistrate. This was translated, for the benefit of the magistrate, from Sinhalese into English by an interpreter whose mother tongue was Tamil. When the case came before the Supreme Court the statement in question was re-translated into Sinhalese by a Sinhalese interpreter. The accused denied (untruthfully perhaps) having ever used

1. It must have been reflection on this state of affairs that led an English Civil Servant to write towards the close of his career: As far as the Civil Service is concerned one cannot help feeling that Government has not hitherto taken this question of efficiency in the languages sufficiently seriously....Office efficiency or the ability to write a good minute has carried a man much further than knowledge of the language or close touch with the villagers. C. V. Brayne C.C.S., in a note incorporated in a Report published as Sessional Paper XXI, 1931.

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some words contained in the statement as now presented to him.' If cheap, homely and efficient justice is one of the rights of citizens, many of our citizens do not enjoy that right. The gift of the vote to every man and woman is ironical without the gift of a popular administration conducted in the people's language. That is part of their birthright.

It should be obvious that the two things, the language of the schools and the language of administration, are intimately bound up together. The national languages cannot occupy their rightful place in the schools unless they become State languages and they cannot really become official languages unless they become the languages of our schools. For example, the State can insist on every entrant to the service of the Central Government being proficient in both Sinhalese and Tamil only if instruction in both languages is provided in all post-primary schools. The recent decision of the State Council to make Sinhalese and Tamil official languages can be implemented only if the schools prepare the way. A language policy for the State presupposes a corresponding policy for the schools.

A short survey of the vicissitudes and triumphs of language in other lands will help us to understand the place of language in the making or remaking of their histories. We have already noted how England discovered herself through her language.

It was Herder who set out to discover the 'personality' of Germany at a time when there was no real Germany and no German literature of worth. In the second half of the eighteenth century Herder laid the foundations of the philosophical-romantic movement, stressing the study of the people, their speech, their folk lore and songs. He inspired the young Goethe and others who brought about the release of German writing from subservience to French classicism, which had for more than a century been a blight on the national intellect. Goethe is thus as great a liberator of Germany as any of the prominent Prussian statesmen of that time. Herder himself earned the title of the Voice of the People. It was the spirit of Germany that was thus created; it found its political

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shape in the following century. The importance of language is recognised in German education today; together with history, geography, art and music, the German language forms a closely bound unity—the study of the German world— "in which the new spiritual direction of the nation receives for the youth the clearest form." [1] Instruction in German is assigned the greatest task to keep the consciousness of "Germanity" in youth "as something living and moving and to awaken a feeling of common endeavour with the creative work of living poets and thinkers".

The German romantic movement supplied inspiration to other peoples as well. To Czechoslovakia, which suddenly appeared on the political map of Europe twentyfive years ago, the German cultural movement came chiefly as a challenge; its fountain source goes back to a long past. For a whole thousand years Slovakia was subject to Hungary and to Hungary's policy of Magyarization; for exactly three hundred years the Czech provinces of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, came under the heel of Austria and her policy of Germanization. During this long period the future Czechoslovakia was being slowly created and sustained by a number of forces. The University of Prague, founded in 1348, kept Czech culture alive and, since Slovak students also attended it, it formed a link between the Czech provinces and Slovakia and thus acted as a national integrating factor. Another powerful force was John Huss, the fourteenth century reformer, whose writings in the Czech language, especially his letters from prison, and whose martyr's death, provoked "a great revolution in the soul of the people" and created "the Hussite spirit" which has so deeply affected the destinies of the nation. According to Dr. Juraj Slavik,[2] the greatest contribution of John Huss was not as a reformer, but as a patriot who stirred national life, unfolded and perfected the Czech literary language and awakened the national consciousness. Still another influence was the Czech translation of the Bible by Kralice, "which fulfilled not only its religious task, but also helped to lift up and maintain the national language and national consciousness". The Czech writer and thinker most known outside was Comenius; his ideas have influenced

1 From an official German publication.
2 Minister of the Interior, Czechoslovakia, in *New Era*, March, 1944.

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educational reform in Czechoslovakia. Thus we see that the re-birth of this nation was intimately connected with its national language and national literature.

Poland has suffered even more than Czechoslovakia at the hands of her conquerors. Poland was partitioned at Vienna between Russia, Prussia and Austria. In her areas Prussia immediately suppressed the Polish language and Polish culture and used the schools as an instrument of Germanization; Austria followed a different policy and deliberately suppressed all education; Russia, educationally more backward than Poland, allowed the Poles in the Russian areas to continue their educational institutions. It was this liberal policy of Russia which made it possible for the University at Vilno and the schools attached to it to become a centre of Polish culture, learning and literature at a time when everywhere else they were being crushed. It did not take Russia long to note what was happening and she too proceeded, after 1831, to replace Polish schools by Russian and systematically to enforce the Russification of the Polish lands. Prussia too now intensified her measures and forbade the use of Polish in education and, after 1871, forced Polish children to study in German schools which were inspired by hatred for everything Polish; there were areas where it was a crime to read a Polish book. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, in order to win over the Polish group in the Viennese Parliament, the Emperor granted a certain degree of educational autonomy to the Polish people and allowed the use of Polish in schools in the Austrian Partition. But despite over a hundred years of severance among three annexationist powers, each pursuing a denationalization policy, the Polish nation entered the period of the first world war united spiritually and culturally. Professor Stanislaw Kot[1] explains the phenomenon by the existence of secret schools and societies which kept the Polish language and her national poetry alive and thus kindled the national spirit.

The history of modern Belgium is largely the history of struggle for linguistic rights. The Belgian Revolution of 1830 was directly provoked by Dutch being prescribed as the official language in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the

1 Minister of State, Poland, in *New Era*, March, 1944.

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Walloon population being thereby excluded from public office and public life. In the Belgium Kingdom that came into existence Walloon French became the official language and it naturally became the fashionable language among the higher classes even in the Flemish-speaking areas of northern Belgium. But the Fleming minority clung on to their language and demanded cultural equality. In 1921 a law was passed making Flemish the official language of the administration throughout the Flemish region except in Brussels, the common capital, where a bilingual system was established. Muncipalities everywhere had the right of using both languages. Two years later the University of Ghent was converted from a French into a Flemish institution and more recently a Royal Flemish Academy of Medicine was set up. There are regiments in the Belgiam army that are wholly Flemish or wholly Walloon. During the first World War the Germans set up a Council of Flanders consisting of leading Flemings with the aim of dividing Belgium into two. The Flemish-Walloon question had political significance even on the eve of the second World War.

The youngest of the Scandinavian nations, Norway, was long ruled by Denmark and then by Sweden. She adopted a form of the Danish language, but since her independence she has been engaged in resurrecting Riks-Malet and Lands-Malet to make of these two ancient dialects, almost lost for six centuries, a new national language. Denmark herself found her full self-expression when, under the influence of Grundtvig, Danish prophet and poet, she built up her 'spiritual fortification' against the dominance of German culture.

Other places too have had to contend with the German language. The very year Alsace-Lorraine was snatched from France by Germany, the French language was officially suppressed and not restored till 1919, when it was welcomed by a people who had secretly clung on to the forbidden language. When in the same year Italy took over Southern Tyrol she proceeded to rename the localities, to enforce Italian teaching in every school and to suppress German wherever possible.

The movement for the independence of Greece was connected with the revival of the Greek language and it brought as friends of Hellenic liberty other nations who had

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read ancient Greek literature. As Professor H. A. L. Fisher says[1] Korais, a Corfiote schoolmaster, had the brilliant thought that the literature of ancient Greece might be translated into a tongue intermediate between the august original and the *argot* of the common speech. By creating a new language this industrious scholar helped to call into being a new nation. Greece overthrew Turkey, but soon a movement started everywhere in the Balkans to release Slavs from their oppressors, whether the oppressors were Turks, Germans or Magyars. The Pan-Slavonic movement started with Kollar, the Slovak poet, but spread wherever the Slavs were denied the inheritance of their own culture and finally culminated in the creation of a number of independent states in lands which once formed part of the Austro-Hungarian or Turkish Empires.

In the U. S. S. R. after the linguistic tragedy of the Tsarist regime, cultural and linguistic autonomy is one of the cherished rights of the republics that form the Soviet Union. It is to the credit of the Russian revolutionaries, in particular to Joseph Stalin, that scores of nationalities are now developing as free units where once the Tsars sought to "Russify" all of them, disallowing native tongues and blocking local economic development. "Hamlet" is now heard in the native tongue in remote regions where the very word "theatre" was unknown yesterday.

We may finally note some interesting issues largely linguistic within the British Empire. Canada's twelve-million population is made up of various elements. One-half are of British origin, over one-quarter of French and the rest of German, Scandinavian and Slav. Religious distinctions largely coincide with those of race. Over a hundred years ago, Lord Durham spoke of, 'two nations warring in the bosom of a single state'. Even today the races live side by side but have not merged. Each of the two main races fiercely retains its language, religion and culture. In fact the question of the French language and French-Catholic culture was a deep political issue for fifty years. To satisfy this demand, cultural equality has now been established throughout the Dominion, French being recognized as the main lan-

1 *History of Europe.*

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guage in Quebec Province.[1] The Scandinavian, German and Slav elements, though still forming definite 'racial blocs', are gradually assimilating by having to adopt either English or French as their national language. Thus the idea of Canadian nationhood is growing.

British and Boers still quarrel in South Africa over the question of the predominant language; the Provincial Elections of October 1943 were fought almost entirely on the language issue.[2] The Boer dialect, called Afrikaans, is now given equal place with English in education and administration. Teachers and officials are expected to be proficient in both. At present one language is the medium of instruction and the second is taught as a separate subject according to whether the schools are English or Afrikaans. The United Party of Smuts holds that the Union's duty to produce bilingual citizens is not being fulfilled. The Nationalist Party fears such an aim may undermine the Boer character of the Afrikaans schools and Anglicise the non-British section by weakening Afrikaans and their culture. A distinct Afrikaans literature is now in the process of creation.

Ireland is striving to restore Erse, a long forgotten tongue.[3] The main aim of the policy has been, both before and after the enactment of the new National Constitution of Eire in 1937, the rapid and thorough restoration of the Irish language in a national organisation of primary, secondary and university institutes and vocational schools, and the expansion of their cultural influence to the entire body of the people. Two smaller countries of the Empire, Cyprus and

1 The following are typical extracts from the *Report of the Superintendent of Education*, Province of Quebec, for 1936—'37: "The year just ended might well be called the French language year" (Regional Inspector Ed. Bolley). "Homage paid to the French tongue" (Inspector Royet). "Everything was done to awaken patriotic sentiments, the national spirit, love of country.....The pupils are more attached to their country, the parents were sympathetic with the refrancisation movement" (Inspector Breton). "National education has been the watchword for a long time. It was more to the front this year than ever. Language held the first place". (Regional Inspector Paul Hubert). "The work done in the schools.....to rouse the French spirit of the pupils". (Inspector General of Catholic Primary Schools in Quebec).

2 Reuter, Johannesburg, Oct. 12, 1943.

3 A policy "as settled a matter as the national flag itself", says Prof. T. Corcoran of Dublin in the *Year Book*, 1939.

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Palestine, are of especial interest to Ceylon because of the reasons given for the language policy followed in them. In Cyprus, "the Government accepts the fact that Greek and Turkish are recognized languages of the modern world with honourable traditions, and obviously fitted to be media of instruction in all stages."[1] In Palestine, "the medium of instruction throughout all stages is Arabic or Hebrew.... This policy is dictated by the fact that Arabic and Hebrew form two of the three official languages of the country, and are also the two chief languages used in ordinary and domestic life.... in view of the civilisations and cultures represented by the Hebrew and Arabic languages, and in view of the need for keeping those who have received a secondary education in close touch with the traditional and cultural life of the population of Palestine."[2]

We have seen elsewhere the circumstances under which English education was introduced into India. The statement of Mahatma Gandhi that, "among the many evils of foreign rule this blighting imposition of a foreign medium upon the youth of the country will be counted by History as one of the greatest" reflects universal Indian opinion today. But support for the Indianising of education has also come from a totally different quarter. The Sadler Commission, the Hartog Committee, the Abbott and Wood Report and the Sargent Scheme have all recommended the replacement of English by an Indian language as medium of instruction throughout the secondary school. At the present day in practically every Province, an Indian language is either a compulsory or optional medium of education and examination. The Osmania University uses Urdu at all university stages; three or four other Indian Universities use Indian languages at the Intermediate stage and propose ultimately to adopt them throughout all stages. Progress in this direction is now held up by the political impasse.

The result of our survey may be summed up in two statements, one by Arsenian, that "it has been the policy of conquering nations to suppress the language of the conquered national groups"; the other by Bernard Joseph, "there does

[1] *Report of sub-committee of Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies*, 1931.

[2] *Ibid.*

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not appear to be any single instance of a nationality accepting as its national language an alien tongue".

The present war has seen the emergence of the language issue in a modified form. The leading protagonists have endeavoured, even when they were in the dead heat of war, to get their language accepted as a widely used *second language*. The Germans took steps to have German accepted in occupied Continental countries; the Japanese introduced their language into South East Asia; the activities of the British Council were more discreet but nevertheless bore marks of a cultural imperialism. Witness also the words of Mr. Winston Churchill at Harvard in 1943:

> This gift of a common tongue is a priceless inheritance, and it may well some day become the foundation of a common citizenship. I like to think of the British and Americans moving about freely over each other's wide estates with hardly a sense of being foreigners to one another.
>
> I do not see why we should not try to spread our common language even more widely throughout the globe, and without seeking a selfish advantage over any, possess ourselves of this invaluable birthright.

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CHAPTER VI.

RECONSTRUCTION

We now proceed to consider plans of reconstruction. We have to work out the applications of the position we have taken with regard to the mother tongue and other languages in terms of a school system. The school system must in turn embody the democratic principle of equality of educational opportunity. This means a common foundation for all up to the threshold of adolescence, that is, up to the age of ten or eleven, and then the provision of diversified courses and corresponding selection and differentiation of pupils so as to enable "the right pupils to receive the right education". In other words, to use the words of the Butler Act of 1944, the system of public education must be "organised in three progressive stages to be known as primary education, secondary education, and further education" and the schools should be "sufficient in number, character, and equipment to afford for all pupils opportunities for education offering such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of their different ages, abilities and aptitudes".

For the primary stage we welcome the Special Committee's proposal of "a common school with a common education" as a grand idea—the *Ecole Unique* of French educators. The same school and the same primary examination for all gives the same educational chance to every child. It is in such a single type of free primary school, with an identical standard of building, equipment and staffing, enjoying everywhere the same status, and attended by all the children in the place, whether they be children of civil servants or of scavengers, that genuine equality will obtain and, what is more, the social unification of the next generation will be achieved. But with regard to the plan of work in the primary school we have to differ from the Special Committee. They contemplate a six-year course terminating normally at 11+. A heavy curriculum is proposed, its substance being "determined essentially by the need for giving the child the necessary equipment for further education". In an age which has learnt to recognise the child's right to his childhood it will be wrong to regard primary education as essentially preparation for the next stage of educa-

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tion. Rather this education must meet the needs of childhood. Inevitably it will be preparation for post-childhood education. When we accept this change in emphasis the "subjects" of an adult minded curriculum will give place to what German educators call the "synthetic method". Another revolutionary change needed in the curriculum is the substitution of a practical for the present (as well as proposed) academic bias. Learning by doing is so engrossing a task for children. Hence the need to organise our primary school on the lines of the Junior Basic School of the Sargent Scheme in India. A simplified curriculum, centring round some basic crafts, using no language other than the mother tongue, would naturally mean a shorter course. In a country like Germany the primary school course commences at six and lasts only four years, the transfer to the secondary school taking place at the age of ten. Our primary school could also terminate at ten, but as education here generally commences at five it would be a five-year course.

The Special Committee's proposal to introduce three years of compulsory English in the primary school is no doubt influenced by their desire to make English the "adopted language" of the people of Ceylon and to continue it indefinitely as the medium of post-primary education. But English, compulsory or optional, must drop out of the primary school altogether. It must drop out for the educational reasons set forth in earlier chapters. It must also drop out for the sake of making equality real at the fifth standard test. For if all schools are expected to teach English and if English is a subject for the selective test we may rest assured that those pupils who are most proficient in English will, as now, find their way into the best secondary schools. Further, if we cut off the three years of English from the primary school we can save, as we have seen, one year in the length of the course, which we proposed should end at 10+. The primary school of the future will thus be a Sinhalese or Tamil School based on the full and free use of the mother tongue.

Special consideration will however have to be given to mixed language areas and places where there are linguistic minorities. In mixed areas where numbers justify sepa-

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rate Sinhalese and Tamil primary schools or separate classes in the same school there is hardly a problem. Where numbers do not justify separate schools or classes, instruction will have to be given in the predominant language, whether Sinhalese or Tamil, the other language being taught as a second language to the few pupils whose mother tongue it is. In areas where there are enough of any linguistic minority with a home language other than Sinhalese or Tamil, provision must be made to give instruction in the home language of those children, but since we contemplate all post-primary education through the medium of either Sinhalese or Tamil, a two-year course in the language of that region (Sinhalese or Tamil) should be given towards the conclusion of the primary course. These exceptional arrangements are no doubt inconsistent with the ideal we have urged, but a hundred per cent perfection cannot be attained under any system.

Three types of post-primary schools, practical, senior and secondary are envisaged by the Special Committee. What they mean by a practical school is more or less clear, but whether the senior school is to be a technical high school (on the lines of the Spens Report) or an inferior type of secondary school is not definite. Anyway it is too soon, at ten or eleven, to differentiate finely between the three types of pupils and to regulate admission to the three types of schools by means of a single test. What we may admit is that in any social order there will be manual workers and brain workers and they probably represent two distinct types of mind. In education the former learn by doing while the latter are more readily capable of abstract thinking. It should be possible to make a tentative division between the two classes at the end of the primary stage though all forms of post-primary education should be regarded as secondary. It will be rash to make this division on the results of a single selective test. The head teacher of the primary school should keep a Record Card for each pupil based on periodical assessment and close observation of all relevant factors. He should grade every candidate presented for the external selection examination on a five-point scale of classification on the basis of the school record. Where there is discrepancy between the results of the selection examination and the head teacher's grading a supplementary selection examina-

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tion should be held.[1] Tests have recently been devised to discover 'concrete' as opposed to 'abstract' intelligence and these may be used for the selection examinations. In any event the classification of pupils at ten plus must be regarded as tentative and experimental and not final.

Secondary schools receiving primary school-leavers must then be only of two kinds, Practical and Academic. About eighty per cent will go to Practical Schools, which should be organised more or less on the lines of the Sargent Senior Basic Schools, "late developers" being transferred to Academic Schools at any stage. To make transfers of this kind easy both practical and academic secondary schools must organise their first three years in a separate 'Middle School' under charge of a qualified middle school head who should watch and assess the progress of each pupil and recommend transfers from one type of school to the other. In other words the middle school years must be a period of prognostication and experimentation to determine: (1) in the case of the practical school pupil, (a) whether he should be transferred to the academic school, or (b) which vocation he should prepare for in the upper section of the practical school; (2) in the case of the academic school pupil, (a) whether he should be transferred to the practical school, or (b) which 'side', arts or science, he should semi-specialise in during his course in the upper section of the academic school. In order that these possibilities may be tried out basic crafts must predominate in the middle section of the practical school 'liberal' studies too finding a place, vocational bias becoming increasingly pronounced in the upper section, and in the academic school there should be academic subjects, some technical subjects and at least one basic craft in the middle section. The eighth standard test suggested by the Special Committee need be held only where asked for by the teachers or the parents. All secondary schools will provide five-year courses. A few practical secondary schools may attempt a higher two year course. Most academic secondary schools will however provide a two-year higher school course with a greater degree of specialisation, partly but not exclusively in preparation for university studies. Multilateral schools, combining practical and

[1] See *Special Place Examinations*, University of London Press, 1941.

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academic studies, should be established wherever possible. Large academic schools will also have the advantage of being able to organise their work in two or more parallel forms based on the intelligence of the pupils. The same age-level, intelligence and interests certainly make for effective work.

The Special Committee commence by professing to believe that "the ideal should be the mother tongue medium at all stages of education". They then suggest a range of options. They recommend for the practical school and the "lower department" of the secondary or senior school that the medium should be either the mother tongue or the mother tongue in certain subjects and English in others. The medium in the higher department may be English, Sinhalese, Tamil or bilingual. It does not require much imagination to see that whatever be the alternatives on paper, with the prestige English enjoys in Ceylon, it will become the sole or main medium in all types of post-primary schools. In other words the Special Committee's proposals are calculated to transform all these schools into English schools. That the Committee themselves desired this to happen will be clear from what they say, in a statement already quoted, about their objective being universal English and from what they say specifically about the eighty per cent in the practical schools that the purpose is "to enable those who have passed through the practical schools to use the language in their daily lives".

We have, we believe, already established the claims of Sinhalese and Tamil to be the sole media of instruction in both practical and academic schools. It will be relevant here to point out that practical considerations concerning the school system impel the adoption of a single language and that the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in in any one area. We have conceded that in some cases differentiation of pupils at 10+ must be tentative and that there should be easy facilities of transfer at any time during the next three years. This will be possible only if both the practical and academic schools use the same medium.

An even more compelling argument in favour of the mother tongue medium is the need to find a "unifying principle" on which to base secondary school curricula. Educational opinion now condemns the isolated treatment

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of "subjects" and insists on a measure of integration. The Spens Report lays down that the unifying principle must be found in the mother tongue, English for English pupils. The Norwood Report refers to the three "elements of education".

> These elements, which in our view are more than subjects because in one form or another they run through almost every activity, intellectual and other, which a school fosters, are (i) training of the body, (ii) training of character, (iii) training in habits of clear thought and clear expression of thought in the English language.

The Report lays stress on the last element and insists that every teacher, no matter what his specialist subject, should regard himself as a teacher of the mother tongue, through which alone training takes place in any subject. We cannot help remarking that the Special Committee are guilty of a serious misconception when they suggest as a "unifying principle" for secondary school curricula,—'Ceylon's heritage —both eastern and western—and her place in the modern world'.

The Committee are again guilty of begging the question when they base their case for using English on the score of the difficulty of getting text books and teachers in the mother tongue. We may agree that it will be an advantage for teachers to study up-to-date methods through English but the Committee strangely argues that therefore English should be retained in post-primary schools. One has merely to note the pace at which progress is being made in this direction in all parts of India. The Osmania University, which imparts the highest knowledge through Urdu, has already published 360 text-books through its Translation Bureau. The Annamalai University has so far to its credit Tamil text-books of the Intermediate standard in Logic, Economics, Physics, Chemistry, and others are projected. Almost every independent country in the world uses the national language both for education and government. Japan is perhaps the most notable instance because though she has so well westernised herself in many ways within the space of two generations she has developed and used the unwieldy Japanese language for this purpose; her own language suffices for all things and is used for the most advanced scientific research. Of most interest to us is the pioneer work done in Madras by the

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Scientific Terms Conference which has published a Tamil dictionary of technical terms.[1]

Besides, living languages are not static; they are constantly growing and they will grow very rapidly when they are linked with education. Their very use in the schools and everywhere will accelerate their growth. All languages grow by use, by the addition of words from foreign languages and by the invention of new words to serve current needs. For there is no more a pure language in the world than there is a pure race. So that by borrowings from each other, from Sanskrit and Pali, from Hindustani and English and other languages, by the deliberate invention of new words and by the modification of grammatical forms. Sinhalese and Tamil will grow where they need to grow. They will grow rapidly when they are used by administrators and legislators, by scientists and scholars, by authors and journalists, by merchants and manufacturers as well as by teachers and students. The principle of self-determination applies to a language as well as to a people. Given the chance it will make good and respond to the times.[2]

Sinhalese and Tamil cannot however be made media of instruction and examination straightaway. Something like a

1 In a letter to the writer, Swami Vipulananda, the General Chairman of the Conference, says that "scientific and technical education could be and should be imparted through the medium of Tamil and Sinhalese" and points out that what has been done for Tamil could be done for Sinhalese.

2 In the creation of a good modern prose in Sinhalese and Tamil and in communicating it to pupils, Sinhalese and Tamil scholars and teachers who have received advanced education in English and other foreign languages must play the chief part. Compare what Mr. H. A. Passe says in the *University of Ceylon Review*, Nov. 1943: "It is only the scholar who knows English and Sinhalese (or Tamil) almost, if not quite, as well, who will be able to bring the thought and feeling, the learning and creative literature of other nations to his countrymen; or translate the terminology of modern science or mathematics or linguistics into the vernacular, or adapt the technique of modern scholarship to local needs". But when Mr. Passe thinks this can be done only by reaching "a stage of complete bilingualism in the English schools", we fail to understand. In fact Mr. Passe is hoping for the impossible when he pleads for the retention of English as medium of instruction in all secondary schools and for improvement in the standard of English and at the same time wants Sinhalese and Tamil to have an equal status with English. What we are prepared to grant is that there must be always a certain number, as large a number as possible, who are proficient in English and other foreign languages besides their own. But it is quite a different proposition, objectionable and indeed impracticable, to want "a period of thorough bilingualism".

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five-year plan may have to be adopted to effect the change-over systematically. But the machinery must be set up at once and arrangements made to write books and train teachers. The University of Ceylon will have to continue instruction in English for some time to come. So long as that continues a considerable use of the English medium will have to be made for the two-year higher school course in the secondary schools. Judged however by the experience of Continental and Far Eastern students in British universities no very extensive acquaintance with English will be needed for the gifted students who go to the university to enable them to follow the courses there. The University of Ceylon must itself make certain changes in its regulations to assist in bringing about the desired reforms. The bulk of the teachers in our secondary schools will have to be drawn from the products of the University. The officers in the public services will also be from the same quarter. As we expect the teachers and the administrators to be able to use Sinhalese and Tamil, it is necessary, as a beginning, to insist on a compulsory composition paper in Sinhalese or Tamil at all University examinations.

Some consideration must be given to the order in which various languages are introduced. The pupils in practical schools will be those likely to work "with hands rather than with pen and tongue" and they may not have the ability to study more than one additional language. In most cases all that can be attempted is the second national language, Sinhalese or Tamil as the case may be. For pupils who have shown marked progress in language, English may be attempted from the second year in large schools. Many of the pupils in academic secondary schools will no doubt have great linguistic ability. Some will be able to do one or two additional languages, others can do a number of them. Mahatma Gandhi has pointed out that if the mother tongue remains the medium of instruction it will be no burden for a student to acquire several foreign languages. The best plan would be to introduce Sinhalese to Tamil pupils, and *vice versa*, in the first form and continue it for three years. According to expert opinion, another foreign language may be introduced after an interval of six months, especially if it be an unlike language. English would be the appropriate foreign language to be introduced in the middle period of the first form and continue

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for the rest of the school course allowing those who do not make much progress to drop it after a year. Other living modern languages like Hindustani, Chinese, Japanese, French and German may be introduced, according to preference, in the fourth and fifth forms. Pali, Sanskrit, Arabic, Latin or Greek, may be best taken at the higher school.

A few students will no doubt "specialise" in Sinhalese or Tamil or English or another language that is foreign to them. Most of the specialisation will be at the higher school and University stage. But generally it should be enough if those who study a modern foreign language, though "they will never write a prose in it, can learn to read a book or newspaper in that language intelligently and to understand and speak on simple topics, and acquire some understanding of the people who use that language and of their contribution to civilization".[1] There is now no question about the popularity of the oral method of introducing a new language. Dr. West has urged the use of simplified spelling, simplified English vocabulary and "the grammar to be introduced merely as required (and largely unsystematically) in order to enable the learner to make use of his vocabulary as he gets it". A committee consisting of Faucett, Palmer, Thorndike and West and appointed by the Conference convened by the Carnegie Corporation in 1934 has issued a vocabulary of 1800 words adequate for practically all purposes.[2] This simplified English vocabulary, or the more modest Basic English, may be used when English is taught as a modern foreign language in Ceylon schools.

But we must not forget that one's own language and literature must occupy the central place in the curriculum of every type of school. The Secondary Schools must train their pupils to express their thoughts clearly in speech and writing and to comprehend the thoughts of others. The schools must see the value of clear thought, good speech and writing for social and business relationships and for citizenship. All pupils must also be taught the habit of reading literature with enjoyment and appreciation. But only certain of them can be expected to experience the full joys of literature and to write originally in prose and verse even in their own language.

1 *Spens Report.*
2 P. S. King, London, 1936.

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CHAPTER VII.

TEACHERS AND THE NEW ORDER

It is a stupendous task that is awaiting educators in Ceylon. It is true that re-organisation along the lines indicated can only be initiated through the courage of national statesmen and through State action. But that can only be the beginnings of things. Such a radical re-orientation as is contemplated requires years of thought and toil on the part of teachers. They must grasp the meaning of the new order in education and they must give it shape and substance. This is no light job, but there is no reason to doubt that the present generation of teachers will have the courage and capacity to perform the task before them.

In one sense everything has yet to be begun in Ceylon. For though in every civilised country universities exist which serve as the fountain heads of learning and culture, we have only now set up the University of Ceylon that will study the country's past, the country's social setting and natural environment and think out the problems pressing for solution. The erstwhile University College in Colombo did not fill the breach. It no doubt served as a teaching centre for the examinations of London and we owe to it some hundreds of graduates who have never been to a university. The College could not have done the work of a real university. It ventured little and achieved little. It undertook little research and produced not one single name of note. It awarded numerous scholarships and exhibitions, but turned out few scholars or scientists. It failed to encourage the study of national history or philosophy, literature or art, economics or local institutions, industries or crafts, or the flora or fauna of the country. But the need of such material for national education being urgent the best of the teachers have to undertake the task of gathering this knowledge.

The further task of making this and other knowledge available in the national languages must also be undertaken by the teachers. Despite the recent controversy about text-books whole shelves of text-books and whole libraries of books in Sinhalese and Tamil are needed for the new schools. Hundreds of books in English and other foreign languages

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eed to be rendered into good Sinhalese and Tamil prose not verse; the results of local research need to be embodied suitable text-books for schools. And if the return to he mother tongue will call forth original compositions om as yet still pens then we shall have already arrived at he new age.

Yet another task that awaits teachers is to re-think the eeds of Ceylon education in the light of educational and ociological principles. The numerous training schools in the ountry have modestly confined themselves to serving some aple text-book diet with local curry. But education is no bstract exact science like mathematics, rather it is an pplied science like agriculture and as in the latter the soil nd season are as important as the seed. Moreover education a branch of philosophy and the kind of education that has o be planned depends on the kind of life held in esteem here.

We suggest that the success of the scheme of reform dvocated will have to be assured by a central institute of ducation working in association with the new university. t should sponsor research in education as well as in various ranches of knowledge; it should undertake the publication f books; it should accumulate psychological material of elevance to local needs and it should help to evolve a ational philosophy of education. This institute should xercise a silent pressure on the whole educational system o as to vivify national education. Last and not least the insti- ute should provide for the post-graduate training of teachers. But here it is well to remember that there is no universal method of teaching'. Given the teacher who knows his sub- ect and understands his pupils and possesses some clear dea of what education is for, the individuality of the teacher s as dear to education as the individuality of the child.

While the university institute of education trains the taffs of the upper departments of the secondary schools, he training schools, the Education Department, research ranches and of the publications bureau, the ordinary train- g schools have to train the large army of teachers who will ake a success of the new primary and practical schools. nd since teachers are the key to educational reform an mergency scheme of training is the immediate step to take.

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Sinhalese and Tamil language courses must for some time constitute a large part of the training, and facilities must be provided for many present teachers to avail themselves of these language courses.

Ceylon is at the cross-roads today, in education as in other things. The world itself seems to be in the melting pot and sooner or later a new world is likely to emerge. If Ceylon education has been unrelated to the present order, without re-orientation it is likely to become more than ever out-of-date in the future. It behoves us indeed to see that some unshapely future does not spring upon us from the abyss, but that we consciously create a new Ceylon. There are however good reasons for our faith in the future. First of all we have our past. The inheritors of the wealth that is enshrined in the chisled stone, the ancient melody, the written word, the formulated thought and the spiritualised emotion that are ours cannot now lack the capacity to create something the new age needs. We next place our faith in the special tradition we teachers have inherited from the ancient gurus who taught in their household or hermitage schools and through good times and bad reared with strength and sacrifice our ancient culture. Then there is the rich raw material of the nation's youth which, like our other resources, has yet to be fully used to add to our future wealth. If we would catch a vision of the Ceylon to be and at the same time keep our eyes open to what is best elsewhere in the world; if we would dare to hope fervently and hope for to make the people obtain the utmost out of the country's soil and the genius of the race, then inspired by that vision and strengthened by that hope we can indeed create the new education that will make a new Ceylon.

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